Tradition and Innovation

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TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LANGUAGE

Tradition and Innovation

Baptismal Rite and Mystagogy
in Theodore of Mopsuestia and Narsai of Nisibis

By

Nathan Witkamp

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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

To my parents

To my wife, Elisabeth,
and my son, Levi

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Preface

It may be a cliché, but the solitary endeavour of writing a book like this would never be accomplished without the support and motivation of others. Besides to the publisher, who gave me the opportunity to publish this volume, my sincere thanks go to the following persons who, in one way or the other, have contributed to my research. In the first place, my gratitude goes to my original Ph.D. supervisor, prof. dr. Gie Vleugels, who introduced me to Narsai and encouraged me to continue studying Syriac. He was always a joy to converse with and his trust in my capabilities felt like being wrapped in a warm blanket. Unfortunately, he was forced into an early retirement because of ilness. Equally inspiring were my other promoters, prof. dr. Donald Fairbairn—who accepted me as a student in the final phase of the project—and prof. dr. Paul van Geest. Their enthusiasm heartened me throughout the project. I am grateful to prof. dr. Paul van Geest for giving me the opportunity to embed my research into the Mystagogy Project of the Centre for Patristic Research. Others who crossed my path and walked with me one or more steps are (in alphabetical order) dr. Kees den Biesen, prof. dr. Judith Frishman, prof. dr. Gerard Rouwhorst, Mor Polycarpus Augin Aydin, prof. dr. Bas Ter Haar-Romeny, and Charis Vleugels. Special thanks goes to dr. Sebastian Brock, who never got tired of answering my e-mails and sharing his thoughts on a wide range of topics. To Marten Vogelaar, Henk de Oude, and Donald Fairbairn I am indebted for editing my English. The latter also supplied me with valuable advice during the final phase of preparing the manuscript for publication. Next, my gratitude goes to my employer for granting me study leave in order to work on this project. Finally, I want to thank my dear wife Elisabeth and son Levi for their love, sacrifice, patience, support, and understanding.

Glossary

Baptism	The water rite consisting of three immersions.
Ritual/sub-rite	An individual liturgical unit like an exorcism or anointing. All rituals together constitute the whole of the 'baptismal rite' or 'rite of baptism'.
Baptismal rite/liturgy	Comprises the sum of the rituals (excluding the Eucharist). In the case of Theodore and Narsai, the baptismal rite is more capacious than the liturgical mystery, which starts with the pre-baptismal anointing.
Initiation	The whole process of pre-baptismal instructions and baptismal rite.

These definitions will be explained and defended in Chapter 1.

Abbreviations

AC	*Apostolic Constitutions.*
ACO	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum.*
ANF	*Ante-Nicene Fathers.*
AT	*Acts of Thomas.*
AR	An anonymous baptismal commentary witnessed by the two Syriac sources *A* (British Library, Add. 14496, f. 23) and *R* (Rahmani, Rome, 1920, pp. x–xiii).
BDAG	*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, revised and edited by Frederick William Danker. 3rd edition. Chicago, IL/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BE	*Barberini Euchologion gr. 336.*
BS	Bruns, Peter. *Theodor von Mopsuestia: Katechetische Homilien.* Übersetzt und eingeleitet. Fontes Christiani 17. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1994 (Erster Teilband)/1995 (Zweiter Teilband).
Cats.	The *Baptismal Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem.
CE	*The Catholic Encyclopedia.* New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909. 22 Oct. 2012 http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05711a.htm.
C.H.	Church History.
DA	*Didascalia Apostolorum.*
DECL	*Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, edited by Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000. Translated from the German by Matthew O'Connell. Originally published as: *Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur* (Freiburg in Breisgau: Herder, 1998).
Dem.	The *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat.
EB	*Encyclopedia Britannica.* 11th edition. Cambridge: University Press, 1911.
Ed.	Text edition of a classic source.
EEC	*Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, edited by Everett Ferguson. 2nd edition. New York, NY: Routlege, 1999.
EEChurch	*Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, edited by Angelo di Berardino, translated by A. Walford. 2 Vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
It.	*Itinerarium* of Egeria.
MF	Chrysostom's homilies of the Montfaucon series.
MC	The *Mystagogical Catecheses* of Jerusalem.
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca.*
PK	Chrysostom's homilies of the Papadopoulos-Kerameus series.

PL	*Patrologia Latina.*
Procat.	The *Procatechesis* of Cyril of Jerusalem.
PS	*Patrologia Syriaca.*
RAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum,* edited by Theodor Klauser, Ernst Dassmann, und Georg Schöllgen, 1950 ff. (24 Vols. published until now).
Stav.	Chrysostom's homilies of the Stavronikita series, edited by Wenger.
T&D	Tonneau, Raymond O.P. and Robert Devreesse. *Les Homélies Catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste.* Studi e Teste 145. Vatican City: Apostolic Library, 1949.
TD	*Testamentum Domini.*
Tr.	English translation of a classic source.
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie.*

Quotations

Quotations of Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Baptismal Homilies* are taken from Mingana's edition. The reference to both the English and the Syriac consists of three numbers: the homily number, the page number, and the line number. The corresponding paragraph number of Tonneau & Devreesse is added in parentheses. The reference to the Syriac text is separated from that to the English translation by a semicolon and indicated by an '*s*'. An example of a full reference would then be: 3,67:24–26 (3,25); *s* 3,201:17–18. While the baptismal homilies are indicated with Arabic numerals, all other homilies are indicated with Roman numerals. So, II,29:20–24 refers to the second catechetical homily, not to the second baptismal homily (which would be 2,...).

Quotations of Narsai's *Liturgical Homilies* are taken from Connolly's edition. Page numbers refer to the volumes of Mingana's Syriac text, the pagination of which is indicated in the margin of Connolly's English version. References consist of three numbers: first, the homily number, second, the page number, and third, the line number. The reference to the Syriac text is separated from that to the English translation by a semicolon and indicated by an 's'. Since homily number and page number of the English and Syriac are always the same, only the line number is repeated concerning the latter. A full reference would then look like the following: 22,356:1–2; *s* :1–3.

Bible quotations are normally taken from the English Standard Version (ESV); Peshitta NT quotations are taken from Williams, *Syriac New Testament* (2009); Peshitta OT quotations are taken from the *Leiden Peshitta*, when available; otherwise from the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*; OT Hebrew quotations are taken from *BHS* (4th ed.); NT Greek quotations are taken from *NA 28*; LXX quotations are taken from Rahlfs' edition (1935/1979); LXX English translations are taken from Brenton's version.

Introduction

Scope of the Study

The *Baptismal Homilies* 1–3 of Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350–428) as well as the *Liturgical Homilies* 21 and 22 of Narsai of Nisibis (ca. 399/413?–ca. 503) provide us with valuable insights into the dramatic rites by which baptismal candidates (male and female)[1] were initiated during the fourth and fifth centuries in West and East Syria. In current scholarship, it is generally accepted, not only that the two rites are similar, but especially that Narsai is heavily dependent on Theodore. So, Finn asserts that Narsai's "baptismal liturgy is strikingly similar to that of Mopsuestia, save for the absence of a postbaptismal anointing, and that his commentary owes much to Theodore".[2] According to Mitchell, Narsai's liturgical homilies

> ... follow so closely the account of Theodore of Mopsuestia that they might be described as poetic renditions of Theodore's text. The similarity is so great both in the structure of the rites described and in the details of their interpretation that the lack of a post-baptismal consignation in Narsai itself suggests that there was none in Theodore's original text.[3]

And Spinks even remarks that it is "difficult to know how far in his use of Theodore, Narsai may be projecting Theodore's Antiochene rite onto the East Syrian rite."[4]

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1   There is no doubt that early Christian baptism had both male and female candidates in view. However, in correspondence with the language of the ancient sources dealt with in this study and for simplicity of writing (to avoid the cumbersome 'he/she', and the like), I have chosen to use the male gender as my primary grammatical device. Therefore, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, 'he'/'his'/'him'/'himself' is used in a generic sense.

2   Finn, *West and East Syria*, 170.

3   Mitchell, *Four Fathers on Baptism*, 53.

4   Spinks, "Sin and the Devil," 72. See also p. 70 and 74 where Spinks questions the authenticity of Narsai's rite in a similar way, and his *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 71 where he asserts that Theodore's catechetical homilies formed the basis for a new genre in the East Syrian Church, of which Narsai's homilies would be the first example (cf. Vööbus, *History*, 80–81). See further Smith, "Garments of Shame," 9n30; Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*, 71; McLeod, "Narsai's Dependence on Theodore", 24–25.

The influence of Theodore on East Syrian Christianity[5] is well documented.[6] Already during his lifetime, Theodore enjoyed high esteem in Syriac speaking communities. His posthumous condemnation by the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 did not change this. Because of projects initiated by the school of Edessa, the majority of Theodore's works was translated into Syriac before his death.[7] Qiiōrē (d. 436/7), the first head of the school of Edessa that we know by name, replaced the texts of Ephrem with those of Theodore as normative.[8] This all led to a profound influence of that 'great teacher' on East Syriac theology and liturgy.[9]

Narsai himself got acquainted with the thought and writings of Theodore at the school of Edessa.[10] McLeod qualifies him as "a devoted first-generation disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia and a zealous propagator of Theodore's teaching."[11] In a homily dedicated to the veneration of the three doctors Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius,[12] Narsai himself remarks concerning Theodore:

> All who have grown rich from the treasure of his books have been very well rewarded and have acquired an ability to interpret as he has done. I

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5   The so-called 'Nestorian' branch of Syriac-speaking Christianity, East of the Euphrates, nowadays represented by the Church of the East. For an introduction, see Baum & Winkler, *Church of the East* and Baumer, *Church of the East*.

6   See Vööbus, *History*, 7–24; Bruns, *Katechetische Homilien*, 1–21; McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 8–9; Van Rompay, "Theodore of Mopsuestia," 401b–402a; idem, "Quelques remarques"; Soro, *Church of the East*, 185 ff.; Moffett, *Christianity in Asia*, 171, 200–201; Becker, *Sources*, 9.

7   Vööbus, *History*; Younan, *Mesopotamian School*, 102. Barḥadbesʿabbā narrates that after Theodore's death, Rabbūlā (bishop of Edessa from ca. 411–ca. 435), a fierce opponent of Theodore, "had his writings burned in Edessa, apart from these two (commentaries), which were not burned, one on *John the Evangelist* and the other on *Ecclesiastes*. These were not burned, so they say, because they were not yet translated from Greek into Syriac" (*Cause of the Foundation of the Schools*, ed. Scher, *Cause*, 381; tr. Becker, *Sources*, 148).

8   Vööbus, *History*, 10–11.

9   This influence extends even until today (McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 8–9). In dialogues between the East Syrian Church, or Church of the East, and other traditions, Theodore's theology is still an issue, see McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 9; Soro, *Church of the East*, 185.

10   Vööbus, *History*, 14–16.

11   McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 7. Cf. Soro, *Church of the East*, 180; McDonnell, *Baptism of Jesus*, 215; Satyaputra, "Narsai's Christology," 23. Some assert that Narsai even cooperated in the translation of Theodore's works (Winkler, "Narsai von Nisibis," 114; *DECL*, s.v. "Narses of Edessa"). Although this would not be impossible, there is no concrete evidence for this.

12   On "The Three Doctors" (ed. Martin "Trois docteurs nestoriens").

who learned [to do this] in a stammering way have learned from him, and by my involvement with him I have acquired a way to be involved in the study of [scriptural] words. I consider my study of him has guided me to [interpret] in the right way what has been written [there].[13]

Theodore's direct influence on Narsai has particularly been elucidated by Gignoux,[14] Jansma,[15] Frishman,[16] and McLeod.[17] Their studies indicate Narsai's dependence on Theodore concerning his interpretation of Scripture and his use of typology, as well as his view on God (incl. Trinity), creation, angels, man, salvation, the Divine economy, Divine pedagogics, and the two *katastases*.[18] Frishman concludes:

If Ephrem's poetry significantly influenced Narsai's style, it is the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia which bear the key to understanding Narsai's works … Theodore's all-encompassing theory of the two catastases which entails man's original mortality, the role of Divine pedagogics in leading man to a higher state and the hope provided by the Divine Economy and realized in Christ, forms the framework of Narsai's thoughts. Narsai has therefore rightfully been seen as a faithful representative of Theodore's

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13   On "The Three Doctors" (ed. Martin, "Trois docteurs nestoriens"; tr. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 8).

14   *Sur la creation*, 470 ff.

15   "Dubbele erfenis"; "Homilies on Creation"; "Narsai and Ephraem"; and "Pensée de Narsai".

16   *Ways and Means*; "Type and Reality". Frishman especially investigated Ephrem's influence on Narsai as compared to Theodore's in six Old Testament homilies.

17   "Narsai's Dependence on Theodore"; *Metrical Homilies*, 22–29; *Christ's Humanity in Salvation*, 128–129; *Soteriology of Narsai* (2), 32–47; "Image of God," 465n34; cf. Voöbus, "Theological Anthropology," 120–121.

18   Theodore's idea of the 'two ages' or 'two dispensations' that is fundamental to his whole theology (Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 29–34; Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 72–85; Koch, *Heilsverwirklichung*, 66–75; McLeod, *Christ's Humanity in Salvation*, 60–62; Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, 160–172; Ziegenaus, *Menschenbild*, 57–123). The first, and present, age is characterised by mutability, mortality, and sin; the second, and coming, age by immutability, immortality, and perfection. Although by baptism the believer already participates in that second age 'in symbol', its reality is only fully realised at the resurrection. However, there is some ambiguity in the way Theodore speaks of the first *katastasis*. Although he mainly portrays the first dispensation as a created reality, he sometimes seems to hint at a fallen age (for a discussion of this tension, see Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 32–34). Nevertheless, for Theodore, salvation history is progressive and the second age is a higher condition and not just a return to or a re-creation of the first.

vision of the world who helped spread his master's work in the Syrian realm. This he did, not by translating Theodore's works, but by incorporating his ideas into his homilies.[19]

Theodore was to have a lasting influence on Narsai and on East Syrian Christianity, especially through the school of Nisibis, which Narsai headed for decades. According to Vööbus, the authority of Theodore "controlled everything that was being taught within the walls of the school".[20] His method of interpretation was considered "unsurpassable".[21] In Nisibis, thousands of clergy[22] from different parts of Asia got educated in Theodore's theology, which they took back to their homelands after their studies.[23]

It would seem, then, that fifth-century East Syrian theology and exegesis underwent a 'Theodorean Wende' with Narsai as the protagonist. Yet, some qualifications need to be made. First of all, one must note that this 'Wende' did not occur by complete surprise. To the contrary, it was the common heritage of Antioch and Edessa, that explains Theodore's popularity.[24] The Eastern Church recognised "in Theodore an upright and articulate representative of what was already her own preferred method of exegesis and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures".[25] Secondly, 'this Wende' did not occur overnight. Only at a synod in 605, presided over by Patriarch Gregory I, was it decreed that all the commentaries and writings of Theodore had to be accepted by everyone.[26] Referring to Henana, the director of the school between 571 and 610, who questioned the authority of Theodore and preferred instead the commentaries of John Chrysostom, Mathews suggests that

> there was always such a split among the faculty between the "conservatives" who wanted to maintain a "Theodore-only" curriculum, and the "liberals" who were in favor of introducing other equally eminent authors

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19   Frishman, *Divine Economy*, 180–181.
20   Vööbus, *History*, 106. Cf. the account on Theodore by Barḥadbesʿabbā (Scher, *Cause*, 378–379; tr. Becker, *Sources*, 146–147). See further Winkler, "Narsai von Nisibis," 117; Becker, *Sources*, 9.
21   Vööbus, *History*, 106.
22   In its glory days, the school of Nisibis hosted about 800 students (Winkler, "Narsai von Nisibis," 117).
23   Cf. Vööbus, *History*, 5.
24   Van Rompay, "Quelques remarques," 33–35; Becker, *Sources*, 6; Younan, *Mesopotamian School*, 102. Cf. Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 40.
25   Younan, *Mesopotamian School*, 102.
26   Mathews, "School of Nisibis," 109.

from the tradition—and that there were already some faculty members in the early and mid-fifth century who felt as Henana did.[27]

Notwithstanding these reservations, it is clear that Theodore was a factor to reckon with and that Narsai was heavily influenced by him. Therefore, it would not come as a surprise to find Theodore's stamp on Narsai's liturgical homilies. However, although the earlier established consensus among scholars may seem to indicate otherwise, the relation between Narsai's and Theodore's baptismal rites has not been thoroughly investigated thus far. The separate rites have been treated in several studies[28]—although those of Narsai only in a cursory way—but concerning their relation we have only isolated and generalising statements, like those of Mitchell[29] and Spinks, which are not supported by critical research. So, it still remains to be seen whether Narsai's baptismal rite and mystagogy have been influenced by Theodore, and if so, in what way.

The need for such a study is easily recognised when we realise that similarity is not necessarily the result of direct influence. The shared heritage of Edessa and Antioch already noted, let alone the common Christian tradition, urges us to caution here. To put it to the extreme, it would be untenable to assume a direct influence solely based upon the finding that both rites make use of Trinitarian formulas.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the established influence of Theodore on Narsai concerns only ideas, whereas the homilies of Theodore and Narsai under consideration involve a rite and its interpretation. It is worth taking notice of Kavanagh's remark here:

> Another methodological fact to remember is that liturgies are notoriously conservative. Because they are events in which large numbers of people

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27 Ibid., 110.
28 The only study completely dedicated to Theodore's baptismal liturgy is Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*. The standard work on Theodore's rite is still that of Riley, "Christian Initiation". Other studies include: Devreesse, "Instructions catéchétiques"; Dölger, "Taufbürge"; Jugie, "Liber ad baptizandos"; Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium"; Lash, "L'onction postbaptismale"; Mitchell, "Four Fathers on Baptism"; Saint-Laurent, "Pre-baptismal Rites"; Longeat, "Rites du baptême"; Varghese, *Onctions*, 92–104; Mazza, *Mystagogy*, 45–104; Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*. Handbooks that treat Theodore extensively are: Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*; Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes"; Burnish, *Meaning of Baptism*; Ferguson, *Baptism*.
      Studies on Narsai's baptismal rite include: Kappes, "Voice of Many Waters"; Mitchell, "Four Fathers on Baptism"; Thumpeparampil, "Liturgical Homilies"; Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*, 69–89; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 702–708.
29 Cf. n192 below.

take part, they resist change. Their evolution is normally slow … Given a choice between innovation and archaism, a liturgical tradition normally chooses the latter, especially when the choice involves a time or an event of high religious intensity for the tradition itself. This does not mean that a liturgical structure will remain completely static.[30]

This conservative and collective nature of liturgies makes us suspicious of Mitchell's claim that Narsai's homilies "might be described as poetic renditions of Theodore's text" and the suggestion of Spinks that, to some degree, "Narsai may be projecting Theodore's Antiochene rite onto the East Syrian rite". Moreover, once we realise that Narsai's homilies were primarily composed for delivery to the assembly, possibly even to the newly baptised (as will be discussed below), it becomes improbable that the baptismal rite pictured in them is just a literary construct. Otherwise, we get the odd situation that Narsai would portray and explain a rite which was completely foreign to his audience. Therefore, we take it as an assumption in the present study that the liturgical homilies of Narsai describe a real initiation rite of a particular fifth-century East Syrian community. One may further wonder if someone like Narsai—who occupied the director's seat of the school of Edessa and Nibisis but not a high ecclesiastical office—was in the position to make (serious) alterations to an existent rite. The first reform of the rite we know of happened under Išōʿyahb III (7th cent.) and there are no indications at all that Narsai has been involved in such a radical project as the reformation of the baptismal liturgy.

Of course, how similar or different the rites of Theodore and Narsai really are, and whether our assumptions are tenable, remains to be seen and is the interest of the present study. Yet, the aim of the homilies of Theodore and Narsai is not only (or even primarily) to describe the rites themselves, but also to explain their meaning (mystagogy) to a particular target group. Since it is the level of interpretation where the freedom and creativity of the mystagogue particularly comes in, it is here that any direct influence of Theodore on Narsai would be particularly visible. An interesting question would then be how much of Narsai's mystagogy[31] can be attributed to the influence of Theodore and how much to an East Syrian tradition and Narsai's own creativity.

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30   Kavanagh, *Shape of Baptism*, 35–36. His last remark, that a liturgical structure will not remain completely static, is nicely illustrated by the development of the anaphoras of Narsai's Eucharistic liturgy (Ratcliff, "Anaphoras").

31   The term 'mystagogy' is usually confined to the *post*-baptismal explanation of the spiritual meaning of the mysteries or sacraments (see e.g. *Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Mystagogical catechesis"). This understanding of the term would disqualify Theodore's

Prompted by the impetus of the above-mentioned considerations, the present study aims to fill the gap in previous scholarship by answering the following research question:

> *In comparison with other influences on Narsai of Nisibis, is the influence of Theodore of Mopsuestia regarding a*) *the baptismal rite and b*) *its mystagogy distinctive enough that one may claim Narsai is* (*primarily*) *dependent on Theodore?*

The present study attempts to show that,
– Narsai's rite is not (directly) dependent on Theodore's, but influenced by other (traditional) sources;
– Narsai's rite is not a literary construct, but a real rite that was practiced by a particular East Syrian community;
– Narsai's rite still represents a typically East-Syrian liturgical tradition;
– on certain points at least, Narsai's rite is more archaic than Theodore's;
– Narsai's mystagogy is not primarily dependent on and satisfactorily explained by Theodore's;
– Narsai's mystagogy is the artistic product of him drawing from Theodore, other sources, and his own genius.

Baptismal Homilies from being labeled mystagogical, since they are delivered before the rite (as are those of Chrysostom; see below). Indeed, commenting on the different praxes between Jerusalem and Antioch, Voicu, "Christian Initiation in Antioch," 320, asserts that "Antioch lacked a mystagogical system", because "[a]ll the instructions addressed to the catechumens were delivered during Lent and Holy Week, leaving no room for postpaschal instructions aimed at explaining what had really happened during the Easter Vigil". But this limit of the application of the term 'mystagogy' to the *post*-baptismal unfolding of the meaning of the mysteries seems unnecessary and unhelpful. In fact, Harmless, "Receive Today," 357 points out that the reason most scholars consider mystagogy as something post-baptismal, is that they have made the post-baptismal *Mystagogical Catecheses* (traditionally ascribed to Cyril) *the* paradigm of mystagogy. However, besides the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, the only other witness of a post-baptismal explanation of the mysteries is Ambrose of Milan, whereas there are at least three witnesses of a pre-baptismal unfolding of the meaning of the mysteries, viz. Theodore, Chrysostom, and Augustine (as Harmless points out). It seems rather arbitrary, then, to make one of these approaches the norm. Therefore, I agree with Harmless who regards the *Mystagogical Catecheses* "as simply one instantiation of ancient mystagogy" and concludes that "[m]ystagogy … need not necessarily be *post-baptismal*" (his italics) (cf. Witkamp, review of *Eyes of Faith*, 396; cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerualem*, 37, who remarks that "[u]nlike Jerusalem, in Antioch mystagogy was delivered before baptism").

It is our expectation that this study will contribute to a better understanding of

– baptismal rite and mystagogy in Theodore and Narsai;
– the influence of Theodore on Narsai regarding baptismal rite and mystagogy;
– the different (traditional) influences on Narsai's rite and the creative role of Narsai himself;
– continuity and discontinuity (tradition and innovation) within the East Syrian baptismal tradition;
– the West and East-Syrian baptismal tradition in general.[32]

Theodore of Mopsuestia

Life and Works[33]

We do not know very much about Theodore's early life. He must have been born in Antioch, into a wealthy family, in about 350 and had at least one brother, Polychronius, the later bishop of Apamea, and a cousin named Paeanius. At the prestigious school of the pagan rhetor Libanius, where he received a classical education in philosophy and rhetoric, he befriended Maximus, the later bishop of Seleucia, and John Chrysostom, his lifelong friend. The three men joined the ἀσκητήριον, the renowned monastic school near Antioch, run by Diodore (later bishop of Tarsus) and Carterius. Sometime later, when Theodore was about twenty years of age, he was said to have intended to marry a girl named Hermione and to return to a secular life, but was persuaded by Chrysostom to continue his life of asceticism.[34] He was ordained a priest by Flavian, the bishop of Antioch, in 383 and became bishop of Mopsuestia in 392.[35] It seems that

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32   The present study has been been done within the framework of the Mystagogy Project of the Netherlands Centre for Patristic Research (See Van Geest, *Eyes of Faith*, especially pp. 3–22).

33   Swete, "Theodorus"; Devreesse, *Essai*, 1–52; Bruns, *Himmel*, 21–30; Gerber, *Nicänum*, 3–16; McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 3–7; *TRE* Vol. 33, s.v. "Theodor von Mopsuestia"; Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult*, 27–46; *EEChurch*, s.v. "Theodore of Mopsuestia"; Conti & Elowsky, *Gospel of John*, xvii–xxii; Van Rompay, "Theodore of Mopsuestia"; *EEC*, s.v. "Theodore of Mopsuestia"; *DECL*, s.v. "Theodore of Mopsuestia". Our knowledge about Theodore's life is based mainly upon three early historians: Sozomen, *C.H.* VIII,2; Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *C.H.* V,27 and V,40; and Socrates Scholasticus, *C.H.* VI,3.

34   The genuineness of this event depends on whether the 'Theodore' of Chrysostom's *Epistula ad Theodorum* is actually Theodore of Mopsuestia. Some hold that the epistle is addressed to Theodore of Mopsuestia and genuine, while others dismiss it as a later forgery by Theodore's opponents. See Bruns, *Himmel*, 22n12; Gerber, *Nicänum*, 4n7; cf. Van Rompay, "Theodore of Mopsuestia".

35   The occasion for his ordination seems to have been his involvement in a disputation in

between his stay in Antioch and Mopsuestia, he stayed in Tarsus with Diodore for several years.[36] Theodore died circa 428 as an esteemed Churchman. After his death, however, he was dragged down into the campaigns against Nestorianism, of which he began to be seen as one of the originators. This ultimately resulted in the posthumous condemnation of both his person and views at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. As discussed above, he remained highly respected in the East-Syrian Church.

No doubt, the studies under Libanius and Diodore contributed to Theodore's intellectual and spiritual formation. He was a strong opponent of Origen's allegorism and is notorious for his literal historical interpretation of Scripture.[37] Theodore is also known as a fierce opponent of several heresies, like Arianism, Macedonianism, Eunomianism, and Apollinarianism.[38]

Theodore's condemnation resulted in the disappearance of most of his works in Greek. Fortunately, all his writings had already been translated into Syriac and survived for centuries.[39] However, the subsequent waves of persecution against the East-Syrian Christians resulted in the near disappearance of the Syriac versions too. Two medieval Nestorian catalogue lists attest the extent of Theodore's oeuvre,[40] which can be divided into exegetical and theological works. The lists mention commentaries on almost every book of the Bible.

Anazarba with the Macedonians (Pneumatomachoi), who denied the full personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit. Since the Macedonian bishops refused to discuss with someone lower in rank, Theodore was made bishop of Mopsuestia. See Gerber, *Nicänum*, 5; *BS*, 5; *Controverse avec les Macédoniens*, 635. Theodore's *Discourse against the Macedonians* is from that time.

36   Swete, "Theodorus," 966 (cf. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 4); Bruns, *Himmel*, 23; *BS*, 5; Gerber, *Nicänum*, 4; *TRE* Vol. 33, s.v. "Theodor von Mopsuestia". Theodore's stay in Tarsus is mentioned in the *Ecclesiastica Historia* of Hesychius of Jerusalem, which has been incorporated into the proceedings of the second council of Constantinople (553): "... *et Antiochia relicta in Tarsum transmigrauit, ex qua in Mopsuestiam transiit, ordinatus in eam episcopus* ..." (Schwartz & Straub, *ACO* IV,1,90,10 f.).

37   Cf. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 17–23.

38   Swete, "Theodorus," 969a–b; Devreesse, *Essai*, 43–50; Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult*, 33–43; Bruns, *Himmel*, 23–30; *TRE* Vol. 33, s.v. "Theodor von Mopsuestia"; Gerber, *Nicänum*, 9. Theodoret of Cyrrhus calls Theodore of Mopsuestia a "successful combatant against every heretical phalanx" (*C.H.* V, 40; ed. Parmentier & Hansen, *Theodoret*, 347; tr. *NPNF* II/3, 159).

39   Nevertheless, Theodore also had his opponents in the Syriac-speaking Church, one of the most fierce being Rabbūlā, bishop of Edessa. See n7.

40   This concerns the list of Ebedjesu (Syriac) from 1318 A.D. (Assemani, "Catalogus," XIX) and the Chronicle of Seert (Arabic; dated between the ninth and the eleventh century; Scher & Dib, "Chronique de Séert," 289–291).

But the only ones extant in their entirety today[41] are the commentaries on the twelve Minor Prophets (Greek), on the Gospel of John (Syriac), and on Paul's[42] minor epistles (Latin). We further possess small portions of the commentary on Genesis, a partial reconstruction of the commentary on the Psalms (1–80),[43] a substantial fragment of Ecclesiastes, parts of the commentary on Matthew, and large portions of Paul's four major epistles.[44] Of his many theological works, only the *Catechetical Homilies* and the *Discourse against the Macedonians* survive in full in a Syriac translation. Fragments are available of *On the Incarnation*, *On the Priesthood*, *On the Perfection of the Way of Life*, and *The Book of Pearls*.

Baptismal Homilies

Theodore's baptismal homilies are *Homiliae catecheticae* (*Liber ad baptizandos*) 12–14 (of a total of sixteen). The first ten homilies are dedicated to an exposition of the Creed,[45] homily 11 comments on the Lord's Prayer, and the final instructions 15 and 16 discuss the Eucharist. The Greek original of the homilies has not been preserved and the text is extant only in a Syriac version, discovered by Alphonse Mingana, who published it together with an English translation in two volumes: *The Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Nicene Creed*, Woodbroke Studies V (Cambridge: Heffer & Sons, 1932) (contains homily 1–10) and *The Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer, Baptism and the Eucharist*, Woodbroke Studies VI (Cambridge: Heffer & Sons, 1933) (contains homily 11–16).[46] The single complete Syriac manuscript *Mingana Syr. 561*

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41 All available editions and modern translations of Theodore's works are listed in McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 184–186; cf. DECL, 563–564.

42 Throughout the present study, references to 'Pauline' epistles may include the so-called 'disputed ones'. The reason for this is purely pragmatic, since classical authors did not distinguish between Pauline and Deutero-Pauline epistles. Especially the discussion of Theodore's mystagogy, with many references to 'Paul', would become unnessarily confusing when trying to adapt the wording to the conventions of modern scholarship.

43 Made by Devreesse, *Commentaire sur les Psaumes*, particularly on the basis of the Greek *catenae* and Julian of Eclanum's Latin translation. Additional Syriac fragments of Theodore's commentary on the Psalmes have been published by Van Rompay, "Fragments Syriaques".

44 For a detailed discussion of Theodore's writings, see especially Devreesse, *Essai*, 4–52.

45 Theodore's creed is close to that of Antioch (379), but it is uncertain whether the two may be identified. It is most definitely not the creed of Constantinople (381) that Theodore is commenting upon. See BS, 24–35 and Gerber, *Nicänum*.

46 The division of the homilies 1–10 and 11–16 over two volumes corresponds with the division in the Syriac manuscript. The colophons of homily X and XVI mention respectively: "Here ends the transcription of the ten chapters on the exposition of the creed, written by the righteous and lover of Christ, Mar Theodore, bishop and interpreter of the Divine Books"

(folios 81ʳ. to 116ʳ.)[47] is kept in the Selly Oaks Colleges' Library, Birmingham, and is dated "about 1340" by Mingana.[48]

Unfortunately, Mingana's Syriac text is not entirely without corruptions[49] and his translation is somewhat loose here and there.[50] A more literal and consistent French translation, supplied with a facsimile of Mingana's manuscript, is offered by Raymond Tonneau, O.P. and Robert Devreesse (eds.), *Les Homélies Catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste* (Studi e Testi 145; Vatican City, 1949) (referred to as T&D). Tonneau & Devreesse also take into account the fragments of codex Berolinensis simul. Orient. 5 (B). A German edition, based upon the facsimile of T&D, is provided by Peter Bruns, *Theodor von Mopsuestia. Katechetische Homilien* I/II (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1994/95) (referred to as BS).[51] Also available is a Catalan translation by Sebastià Janeras, *Teodor de Mopsuèstia. Homilies Catequètiques*. Clàssics des Christianisme 79. Barcelona: Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya, 2000.

Since Mingana still offers the only full English translation, I work from his text and translation, critically compared with the edition and translation of Tonneau & Devreesse and Bruns' rendering where appropriate.

Following Riley,[52] I denote homilies 12–14 as *baptismal homilies 1–3*. Tonneau & Devreesse divided the text into paragraphs. Although this system is much used, it is not very precise. For practical reasons, therefore, I have developed a more refined reference system based upon Mingana's edition, as explained in the front matter.

(x,116:26–28 (x,23); s x,240:5–7) and "Here end the six discourses on the interpretation of the mysteries of the holy Church, composed by Mar Theodore, bishop and commentator of the Divine Books. Glory be to Christ our Lord" (xvi,123:27–29 (xvi,44); s xvi,265:18–20). The tradition usually speaks of the catechetical homilies as two distinct works (Mingana, v, 7 ff.; Gerber, *Nicänum*, 22–24).

47 For a description of the manuscript, see Mingana, *Catalogue*, cols. 1041–1044.

48 *Catalogue*, col. 1041. Cf. T&D, x.

49 Bruns, *Himmel*, 32 and n. 83; Gerber, *Nicänum*, 293–294. Both Bruns and Gerber indicate some errors in Mingana's Syriac text. These errors are undoubtedly caused by Mingana's endeavour to copy the whole manuscript by hand: "As the MS. is not throughout in a good state of preservation and is in many places wormed and damaged by damp, it was not found desirable to reproduce it in facsimile. For this reason I have had to copy all its text and edit it in the ordinary Syriac type instead of following the usual practice in my *Woodbrooke Studies* of giving facsimiles in case of unique texts" (p. 18).

50 Cf. BS, 69.

51 Gerber, *Nicänum*, 17–18 lists several mistakes in Bruns' translation and concludes that T&D is more reliable.

52 *Christian Initiation*, 16.

Concerning the dating of the catechetical homilies, the *terminus post quem* has usually been put at 379 or 381, dependent on whether in homily IX,14[53] Theodore refers to a synod in Antioch,[54] or to the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople.[55] I consent with Mazza[56] and Gerber,[57] however, that it seems likely that Theodore was at least a presbyter while he delivered these authoritative instructions, which implies that they do not antedate the year 383, the beginning of his presbyterate. It has been disputed whether Theodore wrote his catechetical homilies during his episcopacy in Mopsuestia (392 or later)[58] or while he was still an Antiochene presbyter (before 392).[59] An important argument in favour of Antioch is a remark in Theodore's *Discourse against the Macedonians* (392), which would refer to the catechetical homilies.[60] Proponents of a Mopsuestian provenance argue that the many differences[61] between

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53   "It is with a sense of duty, therefore, that the Doctors of the Church, who assembled from
       all parts of the world and who were the heirs of the first blessed Fathers, proclaimed before
       all men the wish of their Fathers and in accurate deliberations made manifest the truth of
       their faith and interpreted also their mind. They wrote to us words which warn the chil-
       dren of faith and destroy the error of the heretics. As their Fathers did in the profession of
       faith concerning the Son for the refutation of the ungodliness of Arius, so they did in their
       words concerning the Holy Spirit for the confutation of those who blasphemed against
       Him" (IX,100:32–101:6; (IX,14); s IX,219–220).

54   Gerber, *Nicänum*, 264; Bruns, *Himmel*, 33; Brändle, "Johannes Chrysostomus," 1234.

55   Mingana, V, xvi and 100n3; Longeat, "Rites du baptême," 193; Abramowski, "Nicaeno-
       Constantinopolitanum," 496; Mazza, *Eucharistic Prayer*, 287.

56   Mazza, *Eucharistic Prayer*, 287.

57   Gerber, *Nicänum*, 264.

58   Some proponents of an Antiochene provenance are: T&D, xvi; Bruns, *Himmel*, 33; Kaczyn-
       ski, I, 45; Abramowski, "Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum," 488, 508 (Abramowski adds as
       an extra argument that Theodore would comment on the Antiochene creed, but cf. BS,
       24–35.); Brändle, "Johannes Chrysostomus," 1234. For more adherents of this position, see
       Gerber, *Nicänum*, 264.

59   Advocates of a Mopsuestian provenance are, among others: Lietzmann, *Liturgie*, 3; Day,
       Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem, 39; Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 12; Riley, *Christian Initiation*,
       16; Janeras, "En quels jours" 133; Vosté, "Liber ad baptizandos," 212.

60   "We teach again the same tradition which our Lord has passed on to the apostles by
       instruction and baptism and also by a study on the fixed words for all things (rituals?),
       (words) which have been spoken by me with great care" ("Nous apprenons encore la même
       chose de la tradition que Notre Seigneur a transmise aux apôtres par l'enseignement et
       la baptême et aussi par une étude portant sur les paroles déterminées pour toutes choses
       (rituels?), (paroles) qui furent dites par moi avec grand soin" (6; ed. and tr. (French) Nau,
       Controverse avec les Macédoniens, 642).

61   The most remarkable differences concern the post-baptismal signing (absent in Chrysos-
       tom) and the formula of the *apotaxis*. For details, see the chapters 2, 5, and 6 of the present
       study.

John Chrysostom's Antiochene rite and that of Theodore make it unlikely that Theodore's instructions originated in Antioch.[62] Also the more developed nature of Theodore's rite would indicate a later date than Chrysostom's.[63] But if Theodore wrote his catechetical homilies in Mopsuestia, his remark in *Discourse against the Macedonians* would then not concern those homilies.

Although Ferguson may be right that the "majority opinion seems to be for Antioch",[64] the matter does not seem settled. An interesting middle position is taken by those who opt for Tarsus as the place of origin, where Theodore would have stayed with his former teacher Diodore before his elevation as bishop of Mopsuestia.[65] This position acknowledges the two main arguments for the other positions: the differences between the rites of Chrysostom and Theodore, and the reference in Theodore's writing against the Macedonians. If we assume that Theodore first functioned as a priest in Antioch for several years before his move to Tarsus, we may conjecture that the catechetical homilies were written somewhere between the mid-380s and 392.[66]

Since only one Syriac manuscript of Theodore's catechetical homilies has been preserved, our endeavour to investigate the influence of Theodore on Narsai by comparing their homilies can succeed only if we assume that the extant text of Theodore is the same as, or at least sufficiently similar to, the manuscript that Narsai used. This assumption seems justified for the following reasons.

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62   Kaczynski, I, 45n94, a proponent of Antioch, counters this argument by stating that it is quite possible that multiple preachers were active at the same time in a large city like Antioch. Although this may be so, this does not account for the important differences between the rites.

63   For the dating of Chrysostom's *Baptismal Instructions*, see below. As the present study will indicate, Theodore's rite is indeed somewhat more developed than Chrysostom's. However, this does not necessarily imply that Theodore's homilies would have originated later than Chrysostom's, especially if Theodore delivered them outside of Antioch. At a specific point of measurement, a certain local rite may have been further evolved than a local rite elsewhere. And it is even possible that a younger writing reflects a more archaic ritual than an older one.

64   *Baptism in the Early Church*, 519.

65   So Botte, "Postbaptismal Anointing," 70 and Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 14–18. Tarsus is also seen as a serious option by Mazza, *Eucharistic Prayer*, 287–289; idem, *Mystagogy*, 45. Cf. Gerber, *Nicänum*, 262–266, who favours a dating shortly before or after the beginning of Theodore's episcopate in Mopsuestia.

66   In fact, as soon as one accepts Theodore's stay in Tarsus between Antioch and Mopsuestia, most proposals for Antioch become a proposal for Tarsus, especially those which date the homilies in the latter part of his 'Antiochene presbyterate' (e.g. Bruns, *Himmel*, 33: "… in der Spätphase des Presbyterates …"). Cf. Mazza, *Eucharistic Prayer*, 288.

Firstly, the Syriac translation is usually considered a fifth century product of the school of Edessa.[67] Bruns even ventures to conjecture that it was Ibas (Hībā; d. 457), bishop of Edessa,[68] who was personally responsible for the job.[69] Secondly, although Narsai probably knew some Greek, the existence of fine Syriac translations in his time—made by or under the supervision of his own bishop Ibas(!)—makes it likely that he got acquainted with Theodore's rite primarily, if not, exclusively, by means of a Syriac version.[70]

Scholars agree that the Syriac rendering is of high quality.[71] The translators[72] have attempted to produce a concordant rendering of the Greek into Syriac. Nevertheless, the Syriac is not just an exact copy of the original. Gerber speaks of "eine Bearbeitung der Homilien zu einem Lehrbuch".[73] Another indication that the original has been edited are the *synopses*, short summaries, at the beginning of each baptismal homily and the two following homilies on the Eucharist. Leonhard has convincingly argued that these *synopses* are secondary additions to the text, which, here and there, reflect the custom of the day.[74] An important illustration concerns the phrase "and all his works" (...), which is present in the formula of the *apotaxis* in the *synopsis*, but lacking in the formula which Theodore discusses in the text.[75] Since the *apotaxis* was dropped with the adaptation of the rite to infant baptism under Isʿōʿyahb III (middle of 7th cent.), it is likely that the phrase was added before that time, but after Theodore.[76] Because the phrase is also absent in Narsai, it is possible that the *synopses* also post-date his *Liturgical Homilies*.

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67   Bruns, *Himmel*, 31–32; *BS*, 22; Gerber, *Nicänum*, 20; *T&D*, ixn2.

68   "[O]ne of the driving forces behind the translation of Theodore of Mopsuestia's works from Greek into Syriac" (Van Rompay, "Hiba," 196a). Syriac tradition memorises him as 'Translater' (Vööbus, *History*, 12. 15 ff.).

69   Bruns, *Himmel*, 31.

70   Cf. McLeod, "Narsai's Dependence on Theodore," 19.

71   *T&D*, viii–x; Gerber, *Nicänum*, 19; Abramowski, "Neue Schriften," 68.

72   The two parts of the Syriac manuscript, homily 1–10 and 11–16, are probably not of the same hand, as is indicated by differences in style, vocabulary, and Bible citations (Gerber, *Nicänum*, 23–24; cf. Mingana, VI, x).

73   Gerber, *Nicänum*, 22; cf. Abramowski, "Neue Schriften," 68: "Aus dem griechischen ist ein syrisches Werk geworden".

74   Leonhard, "Ṣūrat ktāb".

75   Ibid., 423–424.

76   This case is further strengthened by the finding that in the East-Syrian 'Nestorian' rite, although the formula itself is absent, it is paraphrased by the Deacon, including a reference to "Satan and all his works". See Diettrich, *Nestorianische Taufliturgie*, 19. Cf. Leonhard, "Ṣūrat ktāb," 424; Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 73.

Theodore's catechetical homilies are instructions for those preparing for Easter baptism.[77] Although instruction concerns, by definition, a transfer of information, the primary aim of the catecheses is not to create theologians or liturgiologists. It concerns the incorporation of "catechumens into the believing community",[78] or, to put it into Theodore's own words, to equip the catechumens for becoming responsible citizens of the heavenly city (the Church).[79] Schwartz is right, therefore, that these homilies are ultimately "an act of pastoral ministry".[80] This pastoral concern motivates Theodore to explain what happens in the baptismal rite. His primary care is to prepare his audience to experience the spiritual truth and power of the liturgy:

> As, however, the time of the *mystery*[81] has drawn near, and you are by the grace of God about to participate in the holy baptism, it is right and necessary that we should explain before you the power of the mystery and of the ceremonies which are accomplished in it, and the reason for which each of them is accomplished, in order that when you have learnt what is the reason for all of them you may receive the things that take place with great love.
>
> Every mystery *is an indication*[82] of unseen and unspeakable things through signs and emblems. Such things require explanation and interpretation, for the sake of the person who draws nigh unto the mysteries, so that he might know its power.[83]

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77 All homilies, except for the two on the Eucharist, are delivered before baptism. See below.

78 Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult*, 94, cf. 28.

79 1,24:32 ff. (1,14 ff.); s 1,152:22. Cf. Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult*, 71 ff.; Gerber, *Nicänum*, 71.

80 Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult*, 28; cf. 68–69. Cf. Gerber, *Nicänum*, 74.

81 Where ܐܪܙܐ/ܐܪ̈ܙܐ refers to the rite, Mingana usually renders with 'Sacrament'. Since, however, ܐܪܙܐ is a translation of the Greek μυστήριον, and use of the term 'sacrament' runs the risk of projecting back later Western medieval connotations of the term (cf. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 140–151), it seems more appropriate to translate ܐܪܙܐ/ܐܪ̈ܙܐ with 'mystery/ies' (see further p. 49 f. on the meaning of ܐܪܙܐ and μυστήριον). This has been done throughout the present study and yields a consistent terminology, because Connolly's version of Narsai's homilies already has 'mystery/ies'. The same adjustment did not seem possible or even desirable concerning the adjective, since the English term 'mysterious' has a connotation that does not fit the context. So, in those rare cases where ܐܪܙܐ functions as an adjective, the term 'sacramental' has been retained. And outside the direct context of the translation, 'sacramental' is used when an alternative formulation is not helpful.

82 Mingana has 'representation', but ܣܘܟܠܐ means 'sign, mark, indication, signification' (Payne Smith, 563b). Cf. T&D: "l'indication" and BS: "Kundgabe".

83 1,17:16–28 (1,1–2); s 1,144:4–13. Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult*, 120–121 (cf. 65, 118) nicely summarises Theodore's approach as follows: "When the catechumens took part in the liturgies,

The interesting consequence of this approach is that the mystagogy of baptism is not just catechesis *about* initiation, but becomes an integral part *of* the whole process of initiation and therefore differs fundamentally from e.g. the *Mystagogical Catecheses* of Jerusalem, which were delivered *post eventum*.

As a skilled catechist, Theodore employs a wide range of rhetorical devices and techniques.[84] One of them is repetition.[85] This occurs within, but also across the borders of individual homilies; each new homily begins with a summary of the preceding one. With Gerber,[86] it seems justified to suppose that this method enables even the less educated to understand at least the main lines of the exposition.

The homilies were probably written down by an educated listener.[87] It seems likely that, in their written form, the instructions were mainly read by learned laymen and clerics.[88]

When were the homilies delivered? In particular Janeras[89] and Roques[90] have dealt with this question. The only clues concerning the time frame are the way Theodore addresses his audience (as (not yet) baptised) and some remarks in the opening and closing parts of the homilies. To start with the former, it is

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he wanted them to know that they performed theological truths and experienced these truths as physically manifest in their bodies. Theodore did not leave the recognition of this process to chance; he never assumed that a spontaneous response to Christian teaching and liturgy would be a proper response. He took pains to ensure that ritual performance had its proper impact on the catechumen. Where the sermons on the Nicene Creed had taught the catechumens how they should believe in God, these five sermons present Theodore's attempt to teach them how to experience God". Cf. Gerber, *Nicänum*, 71–74; Touton, "Méthode catéchétique," 280–282.

84   Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult*, 64–69, 98–116. Cf. Gerber, *Nicänum*, 71–74; Touton, "Méthode catéchétique," 272–275, 280–282.

85   Theodore's far-from-dense writing style has not always been appreciated. Adolf von Harnack remarked that "[h]e is a prosaic and often monotonous writer" (*EB*, s.v. "Theodore of Mopsuestia"). Mingana, V, 17 adds that "this stylistic defect is noticeable in the present work [the catechetical homilies, NW] which is in some places marred by many verbal antitheses and repetitions arising from his desire to stress his point for his readers or rather hearers". A similar complaint has been raised, more recently, by Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 166. However, I agree with Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult*, 103–105 that these reiterations may be evaluated more positively as a didactic device. One must not forget that Theodore's primary audience were listeners, not readers.

86   Gerber, *Nicänum*, 75.

87   Gerber, *Nicänum*, 76; Bruns, *Himmel*, 35.

88   Gerber, *Nicänum*, 76.

89   Janeras, "En quels jours".

90   Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 18 ff.

clear that the addressees of the three baptismal homilies have not yet been baptised. Near the end of homily 3, Theodore remarks: "As such is the second birth that comes to us through baptism, unto which you are about to draw nigh …".[91] And he concludes the same homily with the comment that his listeners "have received through (our) teaching the birth of baptism".[92] They have received baptism 'through teaching', but not in reality yet. Only in homily XV, the first on the Eucharist, Theodore addresses his listeners as baptised people: "… we are now born in baptism through symbols and signs …",[93] "… us who have received a sacramental birth …",[94] "As we received the second birth in water …",[95] and "… we also, who have received the grace of the Holy Spirit through the symbols of the mysteries …".[96] This implies that the baptismal homilies were delivered *before* and the homilies on the Eucharist *after* baptism.[97] Furthermore, the reader gets the general impression that the baptismal homilies are delivered not long before the rite. Theodore says e.g.: "As, however, the time of the mystery has drawn near, and you are by the grace of God about to participate in the holy baptism …".[98] Then, from the beginning of the third baptismal homily we know that the second baptismal homily was delivered the day before.[99] The beginning of the first homily on the Eucharist, however, does not indicate that the preceding homily was delivered 'yesterday', which may imply that these homilies were separated from each other by one or several days. The same holds for the first and the second homily on the Eucharist.

Based upon these clues, Janeras[100] conjectured that the first baptismal homily had been delivered on the Monday of Holy Week, the second on Tuesday, and the third on Wednesday. The first homily on the Eucharist would then have been delivered after the ritual of baptism at the Easter Vigil, but before first communion, and the second on the Eucharist on a day during Easter Week.

Writing before Janeras, Roques[101] not only offered a proposal for the days of delivery of the homilies, but also of the rituals itself. He conjectured that

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91   3,69:3–4 (3,28); *S* 3,203:4–5.

92   3,69:33–34 (3,29); *S* 3,204:5–6.

93   XV,73:4–5 (XV,5); *S* XV,207:25–208:1.

94   XV,73:35 (XV,6); *S* XV,209:2–3.

95   XV,74:20 (XV,8); *S* XV,209:18–19.

96   XV,76:8–9 (XV,11); *S* XV,211:13–14.

97   Cf. Janeras, "En quels jours," 124–125; Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 18–19; Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 70.

98   1,17:16–18 (1,1); *S* 1,144:4–6.

99   "We left of yesterday (ܐܬܡܠܝ) our catechetical discourse with …" (3,48:1–2 (3,1); *S* 3,180:3).

100   Janeras, "En quels jours".

101   Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 25–27.

the *traditio symboli* occurred on the sixth Sunday of Lent, combined with the delivery of homily I, the first homily on the Creed. The remaining homilies on the Creed (2–10) and on the Lord's Prayer (11) would then have been delivered between the sixth and the eighth Sunday of Lent. Enrolment took place on, or directly before or after, the eighth Sunday of Lent, the Sunday before Easter, preceded by the delivery of the first homily on baptism (12). The exorcisms occurred on the following days. The second baptismal homily (13) was delivered on Friday, the third (14) on Saturday, followed by all rituals described in these homilies.

Clever as these reconstructions, especially that of Roques, may be, they remain highly speculative. Theodore just does not give us enough information to get an exact picture of the delivery of the homilies and the proceedings of the rituals. Nevertheless, one important clue has been overlooked by Roques. He is right that when the third baptismal homily was delivered, the rituals of the second had not been performed yet. That is why he puts all the rituals of both these homilies on Saturday, after delivery of the third homily on baptism. However, a close reading of the introduction of the second baptismal homily indicates that at the moment of delivery, the rituals of the first baptismal homily had not occurred either.[102] Since also the third baptismal homily does not contain any sign that the candidates had been enrolled, it is my impression that all three baptismal homilies were delivered before the first ritual of the first homily, the enrolment. Furthermore, the enrolment was succeeded by several, at least two, days of exorcisms.[103] This implies that the enrolment must have taken place on the Wednesday before Easter at the latest, which shifts the delivery of the homilies to the first three days of the week or somewhat earlier. This makes Janeras' proposal the more likely one.[104]

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102 "From what we have previously said, you have sufficiently understood the ceremonies which are duly performed, prior to the mystery, and according to an early tradition, upon those who are baptized. When you go to be enrolled in the hope of acquiring the abode and citizenship of heaven …" (2,35:1–5 (2,1); *s* 2,164:11–14).

103 See p. 137.

104 Theodore's pattern differs from that of Jerusalem and Chrysostom where we find an enrolment at the beginning of Lent. See more elaborately below (p. 107).

Narsai of Nisibis

Life and Works

The main source for Narsai's life, the "Life of Narsai" in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Barḥadbesʿabbā (sixth cent.), provides the following biographical material.[105] The East Syrian poet-theologian Narsai was born in the town ʿAyn Dulbā in the region of Mʿaltā, northeast of Mosul (northern Mesopotamia), within the borders of the Persian empire. He went to school at the age of seven. When he was sixteen, he became an orphan and was taken care of by his uncle Emmanuel, an alumnus of the school of Edessa and the abbot of the monastery Kephār Mari in the region of Bēt Zabdai (West of the Tigris). Having taught at his uncle's school for one winter, Narsai went to the school of Edessa, also known as 'the School of the Persians', where he first studied and then taught for a total period of twenty years.[106] Then, after a one-year stay in Kephār Mari where Narsai directed the school after his uncle's death, he went back to Edessa where he was made director of the school. Having headed the school for twenty years, Narsai had to flee to Persia because of several accusations levelled against him. When he came to Nisibis, he was received by Barṣaumā, the bishop of the city, who persuaded him to stay and to found a new school after the example of Edessa.[107] Interrupted by a six year leave in Kephār Mari, Narsai headed the school[108] until his death for forty[109] years. Thus far the *Ecclesiastical History*.

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105 *Ecclesiastical History* XXXI; ed. *Nau, Histoire, 588–615*; tr. Becker, *Sources*, 47–72. Another source from the sixth century which also discusses Narsai—but much more condensed than the *History*—is the *Cause of the foundation of the schools* (ed. Scher, *Cause*, 383–387; tr. Becker, *Sources*, 150–152), also attributed to a Barḥadbesʿabbā. It is not clear, though, whether this Barḥadbesʿabbā is the same person or not. Sometimes the *History* is attributed to Barḥadbesʿabbā ʿArbāyā and the *Cause* to Barḥadbesʿabbā of Ḥulwān. The *History* and the *Cause* generally agree, but differ at some points. For secondary sources on Narsai's life and works, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 109–113; Tisserant, "Narsai"; Leclercq, "Narsai"; Vööbus, *History*, 57–121; Gignoux, *Sur la création*, 1–11; *EEChurch*, s.v. "Narsai"; Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 1–17; *DECL*, s.v. "Narses of Edessa"; Winkler, "Narsai von Nisibis"; Van Rompay, "Narsai".

106 Two periods of ten years, interrupted by a short stay in Kephār Mari.

107 It is not clear whether this concerns the development of an already-existent school or the foundation of a completely new one (Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 4; Becker, *Sources*, 2–7). The standard work on the school of Nisibis is Vööbus, *History*. On the foundation of the school, see especially pp. 47–56.

108 According to the *Cause* (ed. Scher, *Cause*, 332; tr. Becker, *Sources*, 99), Narsai was also a presbyter (ܩܫܝܫܐ).

109 The *Cause* has forty-five (ed. Scher, *Cause*, 386; tr. Becker, *Sources*, 152). Later sources diverge from thirty to fifty (Vööbus, *History*, 118).

All scholars agree that Narsai was born somewhere in the first part of the fifth century and died in 502/503.[110] But the exact dates of his birth, his directorship in Edessa and his leaving for Nisibis are uncertain. In fact, the only uncontested date we have is 496, the year of the construction of the "Statutes of the School of Nisibis", from which we learn that Narsai was still director of the school at that time.[111] Some efforts have been undertaken to reconstruct the chronology of Narsai's life. Quite popular has been the view that Narsai and many others were expelled from Edessa after the death of bishop Ibas in 457.[112] Counting backwards, using the numbers of the "Life of Narsai", his appointment as director would then be dated in 437[113] and his birth in 399/400.[114]

Another position, taken by many contemporary scholars,[115] goes back to Vööbus.[116] Based upon a critical comparison of the "Life of Narsai" with other available sources, Vööbus concluded that Narsai's expulsion did not coincide with the closure of the school and the great exodus, which he put, like others before him,[117] in 489. Instead, Narsai's leave would have been an individual event, prompted by serious accusations against his person, as narrated by the "Life of Narsai". Since that same source portrays bishop Qūrā as one of Narsai's opponents, Vööbus suggested that Narsai's leave must have occurred shortly after Qūrā's appointment as bishop in 471. If we follow the chronology of the "Life of Narsai" again, the beginning of Narsai's directorship would then be dated around 451, and his birth circa 413/14. Vööbus himself, however, was very suspicious of the long time frame of the "Life of Narsai", which he qualified as "fantastic".[118] He was willing to accept Narsai's twenty-year headship of the

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110   This does not mean that we are on certain ground here. The date of 502/503 is reached by adding to 457, the assumed year of Narsai's expulsion from Edessa (see below), a forty-five year stay in Nisibis mentioned in the *Cause* (cf. Connolly, ix; Brock, "Guide to Narsai's Homilies," 21n2). However, not only is a departure from Edessa in 457 far from certain, it is also unclear why the forty-five years of the *Cause* should be preferred to the forty years of the *History*, yielding 497 as Narsai's date of death (but see Vööbus, *History*, 120, who argues that the historical data in the *History* concerning the plot against Narsai at the end of his life, justify the view that he was still alive around the year 503).

111   Vööbus, *Statutes*, 55, 59.

112   E.g. Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 109; Tisserant, "Narsai"; Leclercq, "Narsai". See Vööbus, *History*, 34 for more adherents of this view. Cf. Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 2–3.

113   457 minus 20 years of directorship.

114   437 minus 2×10 years in Edessa, minus 1 year in Kephār Mari, minus 'a winter' of teaching in Kephār Mari, minus 16 years of youth.

115   E.g. Gignoux, *Sur la création*, 421; Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 6, Winkler, "Narsai von Nisibis". But cf. Becker, *Fear of God*, 74–75.

116   Vööbus, *History*, 33–47, 63.

117   Ibid., 33.

118   Ibid., 46.

school of Edessa, but rejected e.g. his previous twenty-year stay as a student,[119] which he qualified as a dramatic doubling of a single period. But in that case it would be impossible to pinpoint the date of Narsai's birth.

Where does this all lead us? With Frishman I consent that Vööbus' approach to the "Life of Narsai" is arbitrary.[120] Furthermore, Vööbus' theory of a double exodus has been criticised by Becker, who maintains that Vööbus failed to recognise the tendency of the sources and the "Life of Narsai" in particular.[121] He argues that the "Life of Narsai" does not justify the idea of a solitary expulsion of Narsai, but only describes the one and only collective exodus from the perspective of Narsai, the "lonely persecuted". Admittedly, the "Life of Narsai" has much of a hagiography—it even concludes with a miraculous healing mediated by Narsai—and, therefore, Becker may have a point here. And, quite ironically, this same hagiographical nature substantiates Vööbus' suspicion of Narsai's extremely long lifespan. But as long as we have no criterion by which to judge the reliability of the numbers in the "Life of Narsai", and so be able to overstep the arbitrariness of Vööbus, the confusion about the chronology of Narsai's life will remain.

Narsai was and is highly esteemed in East Syrian circles, where he is known as 'the harp of the Holy Spirit', 'the doctor and tongue of the Orient', and 'the admirable doctor'.[122] He was a prolific writer; the *History* of Barḥadbesʿabbā attributes to him "one *mēmrā* for each day of the year"[123] and, according to the *Cause*, Narsai "composed up to three hundred homilies, and more including his other writings".[124] Many of Narsai's homilies were eventually taken up in the liturgy.[125] As a poet, Narsai stood in the tradition of Ephrem.[126] His homilies belong to the genre of verse homily, written in the Syriac poetic form of *mēmrā*, consisting of isosyllabic couplets with the metre of (usually) 12 + 12 syllables.[127]

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119   Ibid., 60.

120   Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 6.

121   Becker, *Fear of God*, 74–75.

122   Vööbus, *History*, 88.

123   Nau, *Histoire*, 612; tr. Becker, *Sources*, 69.

124   Scher, *Cause*, 386; tr. Becker, *Sources*, 152.

125   Winkler, "Narsai von Nisibis," 120; Macomber, "Manuscripts," 278–280.

126   Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 180 calls Narsai "Ephrem's artistic heir" and maintains that "Ephrem's poetry significantly influenced Narsai's style". Cf. Winkler, "Narsai von Nisibis," 120.

127   Narsai also employed the metre of 7 + 7 syllables. For some general information about Syriac poetry, see Brock, "Poetry and Hymnography," 657 ff.; idem, *Syriac Studies*, 9. The features of Narsai's style are discussed by Connolly, *Liturgical Homilies*, xvii ff. and McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 29–34.

Narsai homilies mainly concern biblical interpretation, liturgy, theology and moral.[128] More than eighty *mēmrē* of Narsai are known to us today, dispersed over twenty-seven extant manuscripts, most of which are from the late 19th or early 20th century and none predates the 12th century.[129] In 1905, Mingana published forty-seven homilies in two volumes.[130] More recently, in 1970, the Patriarchal Press published a photographic reproduction of a manuscript from 1901, containing eighty-eight *mēmrē* in two volumes, many of which overlap with Mingana's edition.[131] Yet, only seventeen homilies have been published in critical editions:[132] six homilies on creation, edited by Gignoux (1968),[133] five soteriological homilies, edited by McLeod (1979),[134] and six Biblical homilies, edited by Frishman (1992).[135] The first translation in a modern language was made by Martin (1899/1900).[136] Other available translations in major modern languages

128   For an overview and discussion of Narsai's oeuvre, see Gignoux, *Sur la création*, 6–11, Vööbus, *History*, 69–87, and Brock, "Guide to Narsai's Homilies", who also mentions modern translations where available. See Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 7–9 for the complexity to categorise Narsai's homilies.

129   For a discussion of all but the manuscript published by the Patriarchal Press mentioned below, see Macomber, "Manuscripts".

130   *Homiliae et carmina.* There are two numbering systems in use concerning Narsai's homilies, both of which are based upon Mingana's edition. The first system corresponds to the homily number in the edition. The second system corresponds to the ranking of these homilies on a list at the end of the preface of the edition. In the present study, homily numbers usually correspond to the homily number. List numbers are indicated with 'list' added in parentheses. For a helpful aid to compare both numbering systems, see Brock, "Guide to Narsai's Homilies".

131   *Homilies of Narsai.* Brock, "Guide to Narsai's Homilies", provides a handy comparison of the homilies in Mingana's edition and the Patriarchal Press publication. Several writings traditionally attributed to Narsai are presently considered inauthentic. This concerns, first of all, most of about a dozen soghyata, eight of which have been published by Feldmann, *Syrische Wechsellieder* (McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 8n7; Van Rompay, "Narsai," 304a). The most debated homily is no. 17 (list: 35), "On the Exposition of the Mysteries". Connolly, who also translated the homily, argued for its authenticity. However, based upon the contributions by McLeod, *Soteriology of Narsai* (1), 37–50, Brock, "Diachronic Aspects," 327–328, and the additional arguments of Abramowski and Frishman, the homily must be considered inauthentic. For a survey of the discussion, see Abramowski, "Liturgische Homilie," 87–90 and Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 12–14 (who also discusses other homilies which authenticity has been questioned).

132   For publications by oriental authors, see McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 9n18 and Macomber, "Manuscripts," 18–19.

133   *Sur la création.* Hom. 29 (list: 49), and 61–65 (list: 34–38).

134   *Metrical Homilies.* Hom. 4, 6, 36, 40, and 45 (all corresponding to Mingana's list).

135   *Ways and Means.* Hom. 55, 57, 67, 68, 71, and 76 (all corresponding to Mingana's list).

136   "Trois docteurs nestoriens". Homily 11 (list).

are provided by: Connollly (1909; English),[137] Allgeier (1917/1922; German),[138] Guillaumont (1956; French),[139] Krüger (1952, 1958; German/French),[140] Delly (1959; French),[141] Gignoux (1962–1963; French),[142] Brouwers (1965; French),[143] and Siman (1984; French).[144]

Liturgical Homilies

Narsai's liturgical homilies concern Hom. 21 (list: 38) and 22 (list: 39).[145] Macomber lists all manuscripts which contain these homilies.[146] The Syriac text used in the present study is that of Mingana. Unfortunately, Mingana has not been very clear concerning the identity of the manuscripts underlying his edition.[147] He mentions a manuscript from Mosul, another from Urmia, and a third from the monastery of Raban Hormizad near Alqosh.[148] All three would represent a faithful copy of a common original. A little further in his introduction, Mingana distinguishes the Mosul and Urmia manuscripts from "our codex" (*codex noster*).[149] It seems, then, that this codex equals the Alqosh manuscript. Since *Mingana Syriac MS. 55* is the only manuscript listed by Mingana in his *Catalogue*[150] containing a collection of Narsai's homilies, and since this manuscript is from Alqosh (copied in 1902), it is likely that this is the text lying at the foundation of Mingana's edition.[151] However, *MS. 55* only contains Hom. 22.

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137 Hom. 17 (list: 35), 22 (list: 39), 21 (list: 38), and 32 (list: 59).

138 "Über die Seele". Hom. 39 (list: 66).

139 Hom. 22 (list: 39).

140 Krüger, "Über die Engel"; "Sur les martyrs", and "De memoria Petri e Pauli". Hom. 38 (list: 65), 25 (list: 42), and 4 (list: 8).

141 "Le 23ᵉ memra de Narsai". Hom. 23 (list: 53).

142 "Création d'Adam et d'Ève"; "Création du monde"; "Au commencement"; "Mystères"; "Église et baptême" = Hom. 29 (list: 49), 36 (list: 63), 34 (list: 61), 17 (list: 35), and 21 (list: 38). Hom. 29 (list: 49), 34 (list: 61), and 36 (list: 63) were republished in *Sur la création*.

143 Hom. 21 (list: 38).

144 *Cinq homélies*. Hom. 27, 33, 47, 48, and 53 (all corresponding to Mingana's list).

145 Also indicated by Connolly as A and B.

146 "Manuscripts". Most manuscripts include only one of them and the majority dates from the late 19th or early 20th century. The few containing both homilies are: *Chaldean Patriarchate MS. 71* (12th–13th cent.), *Diarbekir MS. 71* (14th cent.), *British Museum Oriental MS. 5463* (19th cent.), and *Nessan MS. 1* (19th cent.).

147 Cf. Connolly, xi–xii.

148 Mingana, *Homiliae et carmina*, 24.

149 Ibid., 25. He writes: *Codex quem in lucem edimus est codex noster quem recognovimus cum manuscript Mausiliensi (Patriarchatûs Chaldaeorum) et Urmiensi.*

150 Mingana, *Catalogue*, 152.

151 Cf. Gignoux, *Sur la création*, 102; Macomber, "Manuscripts," 291 mentions that all the thirty-seven homilies of the manuscript are listed by Mingana.

Therefore, concerning Hom. 21 Mingana must have relied on the Mosul and/or the Urmia manuscript. According to Macomber's description of the available manuscripts, only two manuscripts including Hom. 21 are from Mosul: *Chaldean Patriarchate MS. 71* (copied between 1188 and 1288)[152] and *Vatican Borgia Syriac MS. 83A* (copied in 1868).[153] Both manuscripts contain thirty-three *mēmrē*, thirty of which are on Mingana's list and Macomber conjectures that *MS. 71* could well have been the source manuscript of *MS. 83A*.[154] Based on contents, either one could have been the Mosul manuscript Mingana refers to. When we also consider the outward appearance of the manuscripts, it is notable that *MS. 71* is written concatenated,[155] like Mingana's edition. Based on this, we may conjecture that Mingana used *MS. 71*. There are also two manuscripts from Urmia, containing Hom. 21 (and Hom. 22 as well): *British Museum Oriental MS. 5463* (copied in 1893)[156] and *Neesan MS. 1* (copied in 1896).[157] Again, these manuscripts are very similar and "clearly derive from a common source", *Oroomiah College 34* from 1715 (which has been lost).[158] Both collections contain seventy-one *mēmrē*—the largest collection of Narsai's homilies in one single manuscript—which all, with the exception of one, are listed by Mingana. Since also *MS. 5463* is not structured by stanzas, but written concatenated like Mingana's text,[159] one could conjecture that Mingana used that manuscript.

After having endeavoured to identify the manuscripts underlying Mingana's edition, it is important to note that it is not the aim of the present study to supply a critical edition of Narsai's liturgical homilies. Of necessity, therefore, we have to assume that the text of homilies 21 and 22 in Mingana's edition faithfully represents the original.

An English translation of Mingana's text is provided by Dom R.H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai: Translated into English with an Introduction; With an Appendix by Edmund Bishop* (Cambridge: University Press, 1909) (contains also the Syriac text). French translations are offered by P. Brouwers, *Premier Poème de Narsai sur le baptême (Memra XXI)*. Mélanges de l'université Saint-Joseph, Tome XLI, Fasc. 3 (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1965), 179–

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152   Macomber, "Manuscripts," 280–281. This manuscript also contains Hom. 22.
153   Ibid., 284–285.
154   Ibid., 285.
155   Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 6*.
156   Macomber, "Manuscripts," 286–287.
157   Ibid., 288–289.
158   Ibid., 288.
159   Gignoux, *Sur la création*, 100.

207 (Hom. 21), Gignoux, Ph., "Sur les mystères de l'église et sur le baptême". In: A. Hamman. *L'initiation chrétienne.* Lettres chrétiennes 7 (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1963. 195–213) (Hom. 21), and A. Guillaumont, "Poème de Narsaï sur le baptême," *L'Orient Syrien* 1 (1956): 189–207 (Hom. 22).

Throughout the present study, references are made both to the English edition of Connolly and the Syriac edition of Mingana. For the reference system, see the explanation in the front matter.

Narsai's poetic liturgical homilies have a different character and outlook than the neatly organised catechetical instructions of Theodore. Rather than an orderly exposition of the baptismal rite, these sermons are better understood as a panegyric on the same.[160] Given these restrictions, however, the homilies present a general chronological picture of the liturgy. That is to say, if we put the homilies in the right order with 22 coming first.[161] Homily 22 pictures the following order of events: renunciation of the Devil, Lawsuit ('exorcism'), confession of the faith (succeeded by the description of the role of the sponsor), registration of the name of the candidate in the books, consecration of the oil, and the signing on the forehead. The consecration of the water, baptism proper and the Eucharist are discussed in homily 21.

Also the target audience of Narsai's homilies is different from that of Theodore's instructions, the latter being clearly directed at those preparing themselves for baptism. A clue to identifying Narsai's audience is found at the beginning of homily 22, where Narsai exhorts his listeners as follows:

> Come, ye disciples of the Master, Christ, let us gaze attentively upon the spiritual writings of Baptism. Come, ye heirs of the covenant written in blood, look upon the substance of your inheritance with the eye of the spirit. Come, examine with affectionate love your possessions, and praise and magnify Him that enriches men from His stores. Come, together, ye purified sons of Baptism, let us depict the word that cries out in the waters so that they acquire power.[162]

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160   As Thumpeparampil, "Mar Narsai" puts it: "Though the Baptismal rites are given, for the major part the homilies contain Narsai's theological and spiritual reflection on the Mystery of Baptism." (p. 226 [126]).

161   Already Connolly, xlvi–xlvii, rightly observed and plainly argued that, based on internal grounds, homily 22 must be placed before 21. That this is the right order is generally accepted and beyond any reasonable doubt. Cf. Kappes, "Voice of Many Waters," 538 ff.; Thumpeparampil, "Liturgical Homilies," 226 [126], 127.

162   22,358:18–25 (*s* :11–16); cf. 22,368:16–24 (*s* :9–16).

The epithets "disciples of the Master, Christ" (ܐܠܬܗܕ̈ܐ ܕܪܒܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ),
"heirs of the covenant", (ܒܢܝ̈ܐ ܕܕܝܬܩܐ) and especially "purified sons of Bap-
tism" (ܒܢ̈ܝܐ ܕܥܡܕܐ ܡܕܟ̈ܝܐ), clearly indicate that the addressees are
already initiated. They are invited to have a closer look at their "inheritance"
and to examine their "possessions". It is my impression, then, that the newly
baptised are Narsai's primary audience here. Ratcliff suggests that Narsai's
homilies are "probably based upon a prose discourse intended for the instruc-
tion of the newly baptized".[163] Although this is possible, one must note that all
extant writings of Narsai are poetic in nature and that Syriac poetry was also
employed for didactic purposes.[164] It is also quite possible, therefore, that Nar-
sai's liturgical homilies *are* the instruction for the newly baptised.

Kappes contends that Narsai's liturgical homilies are "dating from around
450 A.D. or sometime afterward".[165] Unfortunately, a clear substantiation of
this dating is missing.[166] From her remark that "[t]he heretics mentioned by
Narsai are important to note because the dates of their activity helps to date
this homily",[167] we may infer that the dating is based upon Eutyches, the
most recent heretic mentioned by Narsai.[168] From 447, Eutyches' Christological
views aroused controversy, culminating in his condemnation at the Council of
Chalcedon in 451.[169] A few years later he died. Kappes is not the first to point
out the possibility for dating Narsai's homilies on the basis of the heretics men-
tioned. Already in 1979, McLeod applied the same methodology—based upon
the diverse way in which Narsai refers to Eutyches or his heirs—for dating
Narsai's homilies *On the Nativity* (middle 450's to late 460's), *On the Epiphany*
(about 471), *On the Passion* (middle 440's to 454), *On the Resurrection* (perhaps
during the early period of Ibas' episcopate (435–457)), and *On the Ascension*
(early to late 440's).[170] Yet, a critical voice is raised by Frishman who considers
the data too meagre to use for dating the homilies.[171] Nevertheless, the least we
can say is that the mention of Eutyches in homily 22 implies that the homily
cannot be dated before the rise of Eutyches. But can we say something more?
When we compare the lists of adversaries in the homilies edited by McLeod, it

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163   "Anaphoras," 237.
164   Brock, "Poetry and Hymnography," 658; idem, "Ephrem," 363.
165   Kappes, "Voice of Many Waters," 536. This dating is taken over by Ferguson, *Baptism*, 703.
166   In footnote 9 (p. 536), Kappes refers to Tisserant, "Narsai", but no dating is to be found in
      that article.
167   "Voice of Many Waters," 538n21.
168   22,360:13 ff.; *s* :9 ff.
169   *EEC*, s.v. "Eutyches".
170   McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 20–22.
171   Frishman, *Ways and Means*, 2n12, 10.

is notable that in the later-dated homilies *On the Nativity* and *On the Epiphany*, Narsai mentions, besides Eutyches, an individual who is absent in the earlier homilies: 'the Egyptian'.[172] It seems likely that this concerns Cyril of Alexandria.[173] Cyril, alias 'the Egyptian' is also missing in homily 22. As I will discuss more elaborately below, in homily 22 Narsai follows Theodore in mentioning the number of seven heretics, which are identified as 'the angels of Satan' of the formula of the *apotaxis*. Doing so, he mentions exactly the same heretics as Theodore, except for Marcion, whom he replaces by Eutyches and qualifies as follows: "Far greater is his wickedness than the wickedness of his fellows, and he renders greater help to the devil than his companions".[174] In *On the Nativity*, however, Narsai seems to have changed his opinion, since he no longer considers Eutyches, but Cyril as "the most skilled of the heretics".[175] What could account for this? We may conjecture the following. Until his death in 444, Cyril was the chief opponent of Nestorius and was instrumental in gaining his condemnation at the council of Ephesus (431). After Cyril's death, it was the case of Eutyches which attracted a lot of attention, especially during the years 448 and 449. He was condemned at a council held in Constantinople on the eighth day of November 448.[176] Just a year later, at the 'Robber Synod' (*Latrocinium*) of Ephesus (449), Eutyches was re-established, while several 'heretical' bishops, among whom Ibas of Edessa, were disposed.[177] It is understandable that these developments catalysed the aversion for Eutyches on the part of an East Syrian like Narsai, and temporarily clouded the person and ideas of Cyril.[178] At the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451), however, Ibas was restored to his office, Eutyches was again condemned, while Cyril's two Letters were canonised against Nestorius.[179] An annoying side-effect for the East Syrians was that Ibas and Theodoret had to accept Nestorius' condemnation if they wanted to be restored.[180] It is not unthinkable that Chalcedon enlivened the sentiments of the Council of Ephesus (431) where Cyril facilitated the condemnation of Nestorius. This is especially relevant for Narsai if he was too young in 431 to have consciously experienced the events surrounding Ephesus. These circumstances and, indeed, the ultimate consequences of Chalcedon for the position

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172   McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 45 line 127 ff.; ibid., 103, line 510.

173   Cf. Abramowski, "Konzil van Chalkedon," 142; McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 44n23.

174   22,360:17–361:2; *s* :360:11–361:1.

175   McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 46, line 137.

176   Landon, *Manual of Councils*, 190–194; Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 331.

177   Landon, *Manual of Councils*, 265–268; Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 334.

178   Cf. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 4.

179   Landon, *Manual of Councils*, 134–148; Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 339.

180   McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 5.

of the East-Syrian Church, may be responsible for Narsai's adding 'the Egyptian' to his list of adversaries and even denoting him as the chief of heretics.[181] Since Narsai still considers Eutyches as the prime heretic in homily 22, it does not seem likely that it was written long after 451. This all results in a *terminus post quem* for Narsai's *Liturgical Homilies* of ca. 448 and a *terminus ante quem* of 451 or somewhat later.

Methodology and Structure

A Critical Comparative Approach

In older scholarship, it was customary to apply an harmonising approach, which emphasised the similarities between the different traditions, instigated by the presupposition of a uniform baptismal liturgy during the first centuries.[182] Taking the later Western practice as the norm, it was not uncommon to fill a 'gap' in one source with the testimony of another.[183] The almost classical example here is the effort to find, or rather, 'create' a ritual of confirmation in the Syrian rite in spite of its complete absence in the texts.[184] Being more faithful to the sources, current scholarship tends to acknowledge that the early Christian baptismal practice shows a variety which may not be ignored.[185] As Bradshaw rightly remarks: "a very different picture emerges if we observe not what appears to have been common but what was distinctive or unique about the baptismal process in each place".[186] This directive is particularly important for a comparative study like the present one. Therefore, both similarities and differences have to be given due credit in order to avoid a serious distortion of the testimony of the sources and, by consequence, of their comparison.

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181   The 'Egyptian' is also attested in Narsai's homily on 'The Three Nestorian Doctors' (Martin, "Trois docteurs nestoriens," 466,24 ff. (ed.); 493 ff. (tr.)), which Abramowski, "Konzil von Chalkecon" dates after 451. It is my impression, then, that the presence or absence of 'the Egyptian' confirms McLeod's dating and, at least, can be used to put the homilies in a roughly chronological order, i.e. before or after 451. Moreover, the vividness and the length of the polemics against Cyril in *On the Nativity* seems to justify a date closer to the mid 450's than to the late 460's. In *On the Epiphany*, which McLeod dates about 471, Cyril receives much less attention and is treated in the same way as other heretics of the past.

182   Bradshaw, *Search*, 144–146.

183   Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 9.

184   For a survey of different proposals to solve this 'problem', see Bradshaw, *Search*, 146–151.

185   Ibid., 149 ff.

186   Ibid., 146 (cf. 170).

Another important directive given by Bradshaw is what is called the 'herme-neutics of suspicion'.[187] This 'suspicion' prevents us from treating the sources as "raw factual data" or even "verbatim accounts", ignoring genre, context, and the author's intentions. We must be careful not to automatically assume that a particular source mentions everything that was said or done. The advantage we have concerning Theodore's rite is that his instructions precede the rite. Therefore, he has to give more detail than would have been necessary if deliv-ered afterwards. Nevertheless, as we will see, the catechumens are basically instructed concerning the rituals *they will witness and experience themselves* and not concerning everything that takes place. But the opposite may also be true: in order to deepen the understanding of a particular ritual, a mystagogue may use or create images which do not reflect an actual practice. As we will see, this is especially germane with reference to the poetic imagery of Narsai.

Tacking between these rocks of harmonisation and naiveté, we will criti-cally compare the baptismal rites of Narsai and Theodore and their mysta-gogy. The rites themselves will be compared on the level of both primary and secondary structural units. The primary structural units constitute the overall or 'deep structure' of a rite.[188] Although Day maintains that it is "self-evident that the 'deep structure' of an initiation rite has three components", i.e. "'Pre-Immersion Rituals', 'The Immersions', and 'Post-Immersion Rituals'",[189] I will argue in Chapter 2 that the way Theodore and Narsai themselves structure the process of initiation, justifies an alternative deep structure.

The primary structural units may be divided into secondary structural units like the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, signing on the forehead, and baptism itself. Although all parts are connected with each other, a secondary unit forms a micro-rite on its own with its own characteristics, function, and meaning. It is on the level of these secondary units that the most fruitful and important comparison takes place. This concerns the position within the rite, structure, actual performance (bodily movements, words said, and utensils), and interpretation.[190] The posi-tion of a secondary structural unit within the overall rite may reveal the 'inner logic' of the pattern of initiation.

Since we are concerned with the influence of Theodore on Narsai and the fact that the former antedates the latter, it seems natural to take Theodore's rite

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187   Ibid., 14–15.
188   For the terms 'primary structural unit', 'secondary structural unit', and 'deep structure', I
       am indebted to Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 5.
189   Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 5.
190   Cf. Ibid., 5.

as the basis for our comparison.[191] This implies that we follow the sequence of the secondary structural units in Theodore's liturgy and compare them and the accompanied mystagogy with the relevant parallels (if present) in Narsai.

Establishing Influence

Our comparative study will yield both similarities and differences. The latter rule out direct, heavy, or complete dependency. However, in order to evaluate a difference, it is important to ask questions like: *What is traditional?* Are the different practices rooted in tradition or not? *What may be explained by the influence of other sources?* Are there any known (or hypothetical) sources that may have influenced one or both of them? *What may be explained as a particular contribution of Theodore or Narsai?*

Similarities may confirm a direct dependency, but not necessarily. Based on a comparison of the mystagogy of the baptismal rites of John Chrysostom, Ephrem the Syrian, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Narsai, Mitchell rightly asserts that "there is a real Syrian theological and liturgical tradition with roots in Antioch as well as Edessa, and that John, Ephrem, Theodore, and Narsai are witnesses to the same tradition."[192] Therefore, before we conclude a causality, we first have to answer the following critical questions: *Which agreements may be attributed to a common tradition or dependency on a common source?* and *May a similarity be better explained by an influence of another source?* To put it differently: *is there a higher level of agreement between Narsai and this other source than between Narsai and Theodore?* We deduce the following principle as a rule of thumb: an exclusive dependence of Narsai on Theodore can be established only when the resemblance concerns a characteristic feature of Theodore's rite or mystagogy whose presence in Narsai cannot be satisfactorily explained by an appeal to an earlier (common) tradition, and/or by Narsai's use of a specific source to which he, concerning this specific point, stands generally closer than to Theodore.

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191   Ibid., 5.

192   Mitchell, "Four Fathers on Baptism," 56. Rather ironically, however, this insight puts a question mark at Mitchell's certitude that Narsai would have followed Theodore slavishly. Also the three examples he puts forward to illustrate Narsai's dependence on Theodore may be satisfactorily explained by an appeal to a common tradition. These are: 1) seeing "the meaning of baptism in the rescue of man by Christ from the effect of the fall of Adam", 2) stressing "the relationship of the visible oil and water to the inward actions of Christ and the Spirit", and 3) the priest as an important figure. Moreover, he rightly indicates that, like John Chrysostom, Narsai employs bridal imagery, seemingly without realising that this is just one of the many examples where Narsai differs from Theodore.

One final, but important, remark concerning the phrase 'earlier (common) tradition' in the rule of thumb. As Brock rightly remarks, "one needs to remember that the literature that survives to us is but a fraction of what must have been circulating at the time (people often seem to forget this)".[193] One must realise, furthermore, that people are not always, maybe not even in the first place, influenced by *written* sources. This is especially germane concerning Church traditions, which are mainly transmitted by liturgical forms and prayer. Any study which aims to establish the degree of influence of one written source upon another faces these challenges. Therefore, before we can establish an influence of Theodore on Narsai, we have to exclude (as far as possible) any other source of influence. This means that we not only have to consider the extant sources itself, but also that we have to extrapolate therefrom to the unwritten supply of traditions. It goes without saying that this has to be done carefully, within the known boundaries of the extant sources, and that absolute certainty is not attainable here.

Putting the Rites into Context

For the above approach to succeed, i.e. to be able to answer the critical questions and to apply the rule of thumb as well as possible, we have to draw the necessary contextual background for the comparison of the rites of Theodore and Narsai. This will be done by discussing the relevant sources of Syria and its vicinity,[194] which are, in (roughly) chronological order: the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (West-Syria—early third cent.),[195] the *Acts of Thomas* (Edessa(?)—

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193   Brock, e-mail message to author (2).

194   The selection criteria are: a) provenance: Mesopotamia, Syria, Asia, Palestine, and b) nature: how explicitly is the baptismal rite discussed? These criteria are weighed as follows. Since we are investigating the way Narsai's rite may have been influenced, Edessa/Nisibis is the geographical point of reference here. The further a source is geographically removed from Narsai, the more explicit that source must be on baptism. Therefore, although Aphrahat and Ephrem nowhere explicitly portray the baptismal rite—but have important references—they are given due weight because of their proximity to Edessa/Nisibis. The rites of Jerusalem and Constantinople are included for their distinctness on baptism and also because of the (presumed) influence of these sees. Most ideally, a source is both geographically close and explicit on baptism, like *AR*. Since the writings of the three Cappadocians, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus, only contain allusions to the baptismal rite and are geographically distant, they are not (systematically) included in the comparison. Also the *Odes of Solomon* will only sporadically be referred to. Although "a baptismal context of some sort is almost universally accepted" for this early Christian hymn book (Vleugels, "Keeping the Mystery," 331), references to baptism are indirect and the writing does not provide insight into the rite as such.

195   Vööbus, Vol. 402, 22; Brock & Vasey, 3–5.

early third cent.),[196] Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* (East-Syria—ca. 336–345),[197] Ephrem the Syrian (Nisibis/Edessa—ca. 306–373), the *Apostolic Constitutions* (Antioch(?)—last quarter of fourth cent.),[198] John Chrysostom's *Baptismal Instructions* (Antioch—388/389–397),[199] Cyril of Jerusalem's *Procatechesis* and *Baptismal Catecheses* (Jerusalem—ca. 350),[200] the Jerusalem *Mystagogical Catecheses* (MC) (Jerusalem—ca. 350/late fourth, early fifth cent.),[201] Egeria's *Itinerarium* (Jerusalem—late fourth cent.),[202] the *Testamentum Domini* (West-Syria/Asia Minor—fourth/fifth cent.),[203] the Syriac *Acts of John* (East Syria— late fourth, early fifth cent.),[204] AR (Syria—first half of fifth cent.), and the *Barberini Euchologion* (Constantinople—eighth cent./mid-fifth cent.). It is neither necessary nor relevant here to offer a detailed discussion of characteristics and date of these sources. Since we are interested in the context of Narsai's use of Theodore, it is only essential that the selected sources antedate or concur with the (possible) date of Narsai's *Liturgical Homilies*, viz. mid-fifth century. The relevance of most of these sources will speak for itself, but two of them may need some clarification. This concerns AR and the *Barberini Euchologion*. To start with the latter, the *Euchologion* is a Greek manuscript, preserving the Ordo of Constantinople. Although the manuscript itself dates from the second half of the eighth century, its contents, including the baptismal rite, seems to go back to the mid-fifth century.[205] AR represents an anonymous baptismal commentary witnessed by the two Syriac sources A (British Library, Add. 14496, f. 23) and R (Rahmani, Rome, 1920, pp. x–xiii).[206] This text, published and edited by

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196   Bremmer, "Acts of Thomas," 74–79; Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 15.

197   Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 1–13; Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations* I, 1–4.

198   Metzger, I, 54–62; Grisbrooke, 6–7.

199   Kaczynski, I, 30–48; Harkins, 15–18. The date of 388 concerns the four instructions of the Papadopoulos-Kerameus Series (PK 1–4) and the seven instructions of the Stavronikita Series (*Stav*. 1–7), edited by Wenger, are dated between 389 and 397.

200   Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 23–24; Yarnold, 22.

201   Both the authorship and the date of the MC is a matter of debate (Yarnold, 22–32; Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 12–23; Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 2–7). Some among those who attribute the MC to Cyril, date them ca. 350, while others prefer to put them in the final phase of Cyril's episcopate. Another position is taken by those who ascribe the MC to Cyril's successor John, who's episcopate lasted from 387–417. Since the matter is complex and it is not the intention of the present study to take a position in this discussion, I will speak of 'the author of the MC' or just 'Cyril'.

202   Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 21–29.

203   Sperry-White, 6.

204   Klijn, "Syriac Acts of John," 216.

205   Gavrilyuk, "Did Pseudo-Dionysius Live in Constantinople?," 507–508.

206   The text of A and R almost literally agrees (Winkler, *Armenische Initiationsrituale*, 163).

Brock, probably dates to the first half of the fifth century.[207] Most interestingly, Brock contends that "it seems very likely that Narsai used it".[208]

The Structure of the Study

In order to answer the research question guided by the above-formulated methodological criteria, the present research is structured in the following way. The whole study consists of seven chapters distributed over three parts: 1) Preliminary Issues: Terminology and Structure (Chapters 1–2); 2) Rituals Preceding the Mystery (Chapters 3–5); and 3) Rituals of the Mystery (Chapters 6–7).

Since there is no clear consensus among scholars regarding the exact meaning of a key-term like 'baptism', it is the aim of the first chapter, 'Terminology', to pin down a terminology which corresponds, as closely as possible, to the rites of Theodore and Narsai. The second chapter, 'Structure', concerns the structure of the rites of Theodore and Narsai. Combined with the terminology earlier established, the findings of this chapter provide the framework for the discussion and comparison of the rites in the following chapters.

The chapters of part 2 and 3 concern the actual discussion and comparison of the separate rituals and, as has already been said, follow the sequence of Theodore's rite: Chapter 3: Examination, Sponsor, Enrolment; Chapter 4: Deliverance from Sin and the Devil; Chapter 5: Apotaxis and Syntaxis; Chapter 6: The Signing on the Forehead; and finally, Chapter 7: Baptism. The pattern of these chapters is always the same: the first two sections of each chapter discuss the ritual itself, as well as its function and meaning in the rites of Theodore and Narsai. The third section describes ritual and mystagogy (if present) of the relevant sources of Syria and its vicinity in order to draw the necessary contextual background for the comparison of Theodore and Narsai. The fourth section concerns the actual comparison of the rituals, followed by a conclusion, the fifth section.

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207   Brock, "Commentaries," 22.
208   Ibid., 20. See also 52–57, where Brock draws parallels between *AR* and Narsai.

PART 1

Preliminary Issues: Terminology and Structure

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Terminology

1.1   Introduction

In the front matter of this study, we already defined some key-terms in antici-
pation of the present chapter in which these definitions will be explained and
defended. This is most important, since there has to be full clarity concerning
the terminology we use in order to compare the rites of Theodore and Narsai
in a fruitful way. Questions to be asked are: What do we mean by 'initiation',
'baptismal rite', 'baptismal liturgy', 'baptism' and 'mystery'? However, baptismal
terminology is far from being standardised in current liturgical scholarship.
Key terms like 'baptism', 'baptismal rite' and 'initiation' are used with a vari-
ety of meanings. The term 'baptism', for example, may be used to refer to the
whole of initiation or only to the actual immersions.[1] Scholars also seem to
disagree whether the Eucharist is part of initiation or not.[2] And it is notable,
furthermore, that in comparative studies the same terminology is applied to
rites from different geographical regions, probably supposing that the sources
support such a general approach.[3] As the following discussion will indicate,
it is my conviction that liturgical scholarship may benefit from being more

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
[1]   The following examples (which all concern Theodore's rite as well) may be listed to illustrate
the point. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem* employs "baptismal liturgy" (p. 1), "initiation
rite" (p. 5), "baptism" (p. 6) and "the liturgy of baptism" (p. 6) with reference to the same
rite. Therefore, 'baptism', does not refer specifically to 'baptism proper', which is indicated as
'immersion'. In a similar way, Kretschmar, "Recent Research," 13 equates "baptism" with "the
whole act of initiation" and Osborne, *Christian Sacraments* maintains that "[t]he entire ser-
vice was called 'baptism'" (p. 137). Yet, Riley, *Christian Initiation*, usually employs 'baptism'
with the meaning of 'baptism proper' (pp. 211–348), and uses "the liturgy of christian initia-
tion" (p. 1), "baptismal rite" (p. 10), "baptismal liturgy" (p. 114), and the "ceremony of baptismal
initiation" (p. 121) with reference to the whole rite. Spinks *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 40–45
and Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 1–54 also denote 'baptism proper' as 'baptism'.

[2]   Again a few illustrative examples. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 105 does not consider
the Eucharist as part of initiation. Yet, Kretschmar, "Recent Research," 13 claims that "bap-
tism" is a synonym of "the whole act of initiation", including the Eucharist. Osborne, *Christian
Sacraments*, 1, 137 on his turn seems to regard the Eucharist as part of initiation, but distin-
guishes between the baptismal rite and the Eucharist.

[3]   Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites* contends that despite "the different languages in which they are
written and the local variations of rite, the initiation ceremonies described in them conform
in essentials to a common pattern" (p. 1).

careful about the terminology used and from founding its terminology upon the sources themselves.

Yet defining terms is a matter not only of demarcation, but also of coherence. The latter concerns the inner connection of rite and sub-rites, whole and parts. As a semantic grid, our terminology covers the whole rite. With other words, our terminology constitutes an interface to structure the rite. This is no minor issue. It makes a big difference, for example, whether 'baptism' refers to 'baptism proper', or to a larger rite starting with the renunciation. In the latter instance, it would be misleading also to denote the water rite as 'baptism'. Better alternatives would then be 'immersion(s)', or 'baptism proper'. In a comparable way, we have to urge caution concerning the use of 'pre-baptismal' and 'post-baptismal'. Application of these adjectives is only justified if 'baptism' refers to the water rite, since it makes no sense to speak of 'pre-baptismal' rituals if 'baptism' encompasses the whole rite under investigation. In such a case it would be better to use 'pre-immersion'.

It is a small step from structure to meaning. Of course, our structural grid does not affect the order of events as such, but it certainly determines the way we approach and interpret it. It certainly matters whether 'baptism' refers to the water bath only or to the whole process of initiation. It certainly matters whether some ritual is interpreted as preparatory or as part of the baptismal rite itself. It certainly matters whether the Eucharist is an integral part of baptism or the consequence of it. This all concerns the mystagogy, since we do not have a better entry to a rite then through the (subjective) understanding of the mystagogue himself. This interpretation will be carried by a certain terminology that reflects the mystagogue's understanding of inner structure and coherence. Therefore, any effort to develop a fruitful framework that does most justice to a rite is best founded upon (the mystagogy of) the rite itself. In this way, we have come full circle, that is, the mystagogical interpretation of a certain rite will equip us with a sound terminology to approach and structure that same rite. This inductive 'bottom-up' approach is the only way to develop a terminology that may function as a fruitful interface to structure and interpret the rite in a way that does most justice to its internal coherence. In order to reach this aim, we have to answer the following questions concerning the rites of both Theodore and Narsai.

1.   What is the meaning of 'baptism'? How does it relate to terms like 'immersion', 'baptismal rite', and 'initiation'?
2.   What is the status of the Eucharist? Is it part of 'baptism', the 'baptismal rite', 'initiation' or none of these?

Another issue that has not yet received the attention it rightly deserves from liturgiologists, concerns the meaning and function of the Syriac ܐܪܙܐ, 'mys-

tery', as a guiding principle to structure a baptismal rite. It is very common to approach a baptismal liturgy as a threefold pattern of pre-baptismal rituals, baptism, and post-baptismal rituals. As we have seen above,[4] Day even speaks of a 'deep structure' that all initiation rites would have in common. But how does this all apply to the rites of Theodore and Narsai? Which pattern is the most 'basic' and does full justice to the way Theodore and Narsai themselves understand and approach their rites? Therefore, the following important supplementary question has to be answered:

3.   In what way does ܐܪܙܐ, 'mystery', function as a structuring principle? When does it begin, when does it end? And: How does this approach relate to the more classical division between pre-baptismal rituals, baptism, and post-baptismal rituals?

These terms will be discussed in due order from the narrowest to the broadest.

1.2   'Baptism'

1.2.1   *Theodore of Mopsuestia*

Theodore uses 'baptism' (ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) about 86 times[5] throughout his three baptismal homilies. About 29 times, 'baptism' is used in the combinations 'the gift of baptism' (ܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[6] 'the holy baptism' (ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ),[7] 'the gift of the holy baptism' (ܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ),[8] 'the birth of baptism' (ܝܠܕܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[9] 'the birth of the holy baptism' (ܝܠܕܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ),[10] 'the regeneration of baptism' (ܝܠܕܐ ܕܚܘܕܬܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[11] 'the mystery of baptism' (ܐܪܙܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[12] 'the oil of baptism' (ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[13]

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4   See p. 29.

5   We do not include here references in the three synopses. The synopses are probably later additions made by (a) Syriac translator(s), compiled from literal quotations of Theodore's text and possibly reflecting later Syriac liturgical practice. See Leonhard, "Ṣūrat ktāb".

6   About 4 times. E.g. 1,17:8 (1,1); *s* 1,143:21.

7   About 11 times. E.g. 1,17:18 (1,1); *s* 1,144:6.

8   About 6 times. E.g. 1,23:4 (1,11); *s* 1,150:22–23.

9   Only once: 3,69:33–34 (3,29); *s* 3,204:5. Lit.: "the birth in baptism", so *BS*: "die Geburt in der Taufe". The translation of *T&D*, "la naissance baptismale", may mean "the birth of baptism" as well as "the birth in baptism".

10   Only once: 2,41:11 (2,9); *s* 2,171:3.

11   Only once: 2,43:21–22 (2,12); *s* 2,173:20–21.

12   Only once: 2,44:17–18 (2,14); *s* 2,174:23.

13   Only once: 3,49:1 (3,1); *s* 3,180:4.

'the grace of baptism' (ܟ݀ܕܝܪܐܡܟܚܕܪ ܟܕܐܠܝܬ),[14] 'the benefits of baptism'
(ܟܕܝܪܐܡܟܚܕܪ ܟ݀ܕܠܬ),[15] 'the time of baptism' (ܟܕܝܪܐܡܟܚܕܪ ܪܡܚܬ݀ܠܐ ܟܐܠܪܐ),[16] and
'the water of baptism' (ܟܕܝܪܐܡܟܚܕܪ ܪܬܚ).[17] Besides 'the oil of baptism' and
'the water of baptism', the abovementioned terms operate more or less as syn-
onyms of 'baptism'.

From the beginning of homily 1 onwards, Theodore portrays the baptizands
as people who are in a process of 'drawing near to baptism'. This 'movement' is
expressed by the recurring use of the verb 'to approach', 'to draw near' (ܩܪܒ),
often closely connected with 'baptism' in phrases like 'draw near to baptism'
(with slight variances).[18] What is this 'baptism' that the candidate is drawing
near to? Interestingly, on the threshold of complete anointing, the novice is
still 'approaching' baptism (italics mine):

> *You draw, therefore, nigh unto the holy baptism*, and before everything you
> take off your garments. As when Adam was formerly naked and was in
> nothing ashamed of himself, but after having broken the commandment
> and become mortal, he found himself in need of an outer covering, so also
> you, who are ready *to draw nigh unto the gift of the holy baptism* …[19]

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14   About 2 times: 3,52:26 (3,6); *s* 3,184:14.

15   About 8 times. E.g. 3,62:16–17 (3,17); s 3,195:17.

16   Only once: 3,62:34 (3,18); *s* 3,196:4–5.

17   Only once: 3,63:18 (3,19); *s* 3,196:25.

18   E.g. 'who draw nigh unto the gift of baptism' 1,17:8 (1,1)—ܟܕܚܡܐܡ ܡܟܚܕܕ ܠܡܠܟ
      ܪܬܚܐܪܝܚ݀ (s 1,143:21); 'He who wishes to draw nigh unto the gift of the holy bap-
      tism' 1,23:4 (1,11)—ܟܕܝܪܐ ܟܚܕܕܪ ܟܕܚܡܐܡܠܕ ܪܡܐܚܚܚ ܟܕܝܚܚ ܟܚܕܡ ܡܚܚ ܠܚܡܚ ܡܩ
      (s 1,150:22–23); 'those who draw nigh unto baptism' 1,25:2 (1,14)—ܡܟܚܡܕ ܠܡܠܟ
      ܟܕܝܪܐܡܟܚܕܠ (s 1,153:2). According to Meyers, "Structure," 37, Theodore's rite testifies of
      an original two-step rite with the first part comprising the renunciation/adherence, sign-
      ing on the forehead and the *orarium,* and the second part covering the remainder of the
      baptismal rite. One of her arguments for this view is based upon the phenomenon that,
      after the *orarium*, Theodore uses "phrases such as, 'you receive the remaining part of the
      mysteries', and, 'you draw nigh unto the holy baptism'." (p. 37). Meyers holds that this "lan-
      guage implies that he thought of the rite in two parts" (p. 37). However, this argumentation
      is flawed. Not only does Theodore use expressions like "you draw nigh unto the holy bap-
      tism" right from the beginning of homily 1, as we have plainly shown, it also seems rather
      odd to interpret the expression "the remaining part of the mysteries" as evidence for a
      two-step rite, since Theodore uses this phrase only once and right after the discussion of
      the first mystery. Since the whole rite covers several mysteries, it is natural for Theodore
      to use this expression where it stands and it seems forced to find here an argument for an
      original two-step liturgy. This is not to deny the mere possibility of an original two-step
      rite, but only to indicate that one of Meyers' arguments does not hold up.

19   3,54:3–12 (3,8); s 3,185:25–186:7. The context reveals that the 'you' (ܐܢܬ) does not in the
      first place refer to the listeners at the moment of catechesis, but the (fictional) baptizand

It is only through the water rite itself, that the baptizand partakes in the expected 'gift of baptism' and is no longer 'drawing nigh' (italics mine):

> The priest stands up and approaches his hand, which he places on your head, and says: "So-and-so is baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," while wearing the aforesaid apparel which he wore when you were on your knees and he signed you on your forehead, and when he consecrated the water. It is in this apparel that he performs *the gift of baptism*, because it is right for him to perform all the mystery while wearing it, as it denotes the renovation found in the next world, to which you will be transferred through this same mystery.[20]

Apparently, 'baptism' concerns the water rite, consisting of three immersions, and not something else. A closer look at both the employed terminology and the effects of baptism will further confirm this picture.

Concerning terminology, the following deserves special attention. Discussing the first immersion of the water rite, Theodore remarks: "If you were allowed to speak at that time, you would have said: "Amen," a word which we believe to mean that we subscribe to the things said by the priest ..."[21] However, Theodore continues, "You are ... not allowed to speak at *the time of baptism* (ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܥܕܢܐ), as it behoves you to receive the renewal through the mysteries, when you are baptised, in silence and fear ..."[22] The frame of baptism proper, consisting of the three immersions in water, constitutes the "time of baptism". This way of speaking makes clear that 'baptism' refers to the water rite itself and not to a larger cluster of rituals.

Next, Theodore neatly distinguishes between 'baptism' and 'immersion'. There is just one 'baptism', consisting of three 'immersions' (italics mine):

> You perform *three identical immersions*,[23] one in the name of the Father, another in the name of the Son, and another in the name of the Holy

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within the timeframe of the narrative of the homilies. For example, after the discussion of baptism proper, Theodore addresses the neophyte thus: "You have now received (ܫܩܠܬ) baptism which is the second birth; you have fulfilled (ܘܡܠܝܬ) by your baptism (ܒܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܟ) in water the rite of the burial ..." (3,67:23–25 (3,25); *s* 3,201:16–17).

20   3,58:24–33 (3,14); *s* 3,191:14–20.
21   3,62:26–29 (3,18); *s* 3,195:23–26.
22   3,62:33–36 (3,18); *s* 3,196:4–6. Italics mine.
23   Lit. "Three times, you immerse yourself ..." (ܐܢܬ ܢܦܫܟ ܡܛܒܥ ܐܢܬ ܙܒܢܝܢ ܬܠܬ)—*s* 3,197:1. *T&D*: "Trois fois, tu t'enfonces ..."; *BS*: "Dreimal tauchst du ein ..." (3,20).

Spirit; *your immersions are done in an identical way*[24] in order that you may know that each one of those names is equally perfect and able to confer the benefits of *baptism*. You *immerse yourself in water three times*, according to the words of the priests, but you go out of the water once in order that you may know *that baptism is one*, and one also the grace which is accomplished in it by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who are never separated from one another as they are one nature. This is the reason why, although each one of them is able to confer the gift—as the baptism by which you are baptised in the name of each one of them shows—yet we believe that we only receive *a complete baptism* when the call upon the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is finished.[25]

It is important to note that for the immersions the verb 'to sink, be sunk' (ܥܡܕ)[26] is used and not 'to baptise' (ܥܡܕ). The latter (and the relating noun) refers to the whole of the water rite, consisting of three immersions, as in: "So-and-so is baptised (ܥܡܕ) in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".[27] For this reason, it is not in harmony with Theodore's terminology and even misleading to call the water rite 'immersion'.[28] Such an approach does no justice to Theodore's own terminology and also wrongly suggests that the water rite is not itself 'baptism', but only part of a larger rite with that name. Although the whole 'baptismal rite' indeed embraces more than the water rite itself (see the discussion below), the term 'baptism' is still reserved for this central ritual.

As for the effects of baptism, it is clear that these are realised by the water rite. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the 'water of baptism' (ܡܝܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) becomes a "reverential womb" and "those who descend into it may be fashioned afresh by the grace of the Holy Spirit and born again into a new and virtuous human nature".[29] It is "in the water"[30] wherein the 'birth of

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24   'Immersions' is not found in the Syriac text. Lit. "As each of them is called/named ..." (ܐܝܟ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ)—s 3,197:3–4. Mingana relates the phrase to the immersions, but it seems more likely that it concerns the previous mention of the three divine Names. So T&D: "comme chacun d'eux est nommé, tu sais qu'il a une égale perfection ..." and BS: "Indem nun jeder einzelne genannt wird, sollst du erkennen, daß eine vollkommene Gleichheit besteht und imstande ist ...".

25   3,63:22–36 (3,20); s 3,197:6–15.

26   Sokoloff, 511a.

27   3,58:25 (3,14); s 3,191:14.

28   As e.g. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem* does. See n1 above.

29   3,56:20–30 (3,10).

30   3,57:3 (3,10).

baptism' (ܠܛܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) and the 'regeneration of baptism' (ܡܘܠܕܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) take place. That all 'benefits of baptism' (ܛܒܬܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) are bestowed upon the candidate in the font becomes particularly clear by the explanation of the baptismal formula (italics mine):

> When, therefore, (the priest) utters the words: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," he ... refers to them as *the cause of the benefits conferred upon us in baptism*, and implies that it is by them that our renewal is accomplished, by them the second birth is granted to us, by them we are fashioned into immortal, incorruptible, impassible and immutable men, and by them we cast away the old servitude and receive the freedom which involves complete abolition of tribulations, and delight in the eternal and ineffable benefits.[31]

The threefold Name of the one God is the "the cause of the benefits conferred upon us in baptism".[32] After baptism, the neophyte is addressed thus (italics mine):

> You receive, therefore, the grace of adoption of children in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and you go out of the water. You have now received baptism which is the second birth; you have fulfilled *by your baptism in water* (ܒܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܐ) the rite of the burial, and you have received the sign of the resurrection by your rising out of the water; you have been born and have become a new man ...[33]

It is evident that it is the water rite by which the baptizand partakes in the promised benefits and this water rite is called 'baptism'.

Based on the above, we may safely conclude that in Theodore 'baptism' explicitly refers to the water rite, consisting of three immersions.[34] Before this ritual, the candidate is not baptised, after the ritual, he is, and has received 'the gift of baptism', 'the grace of baptism', 'the regeneration of baptism', yes, all 'the benefits of baptism'.

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31 3,60:6–21 (3,15); *s* 3,193:3–15.

32 See also the larger context of 3,57:25–67:20 (3,12–3,25).

33 3,67:21–27 (3,25); *s* 3,201:14–19.

34 I therefore wholeheartedly disagree with Varghese, *Onctions*, 103 who maintains that "Théodore emploie le mot *baptême* pour l'ensemble du rite baptismal, c'est-à-dire, les cérémonies préparatoires comme l'exorcisme, l'onction, et l'immersion."

In light of the above, we may wonder how to interpret the phrases 'the mystery of baptism' (ܐ̄ܪܙܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[35] and 'the oil of baptism' (ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ).[36] As we will have a closer look at Theodore's use of 'mystery' below, and this investigation will deepen both our understanding of 'mystery' and 'baptism', we will leave this issue in abeyance for now.

1.2.2 *Narsai of Nisibis*

Narsai uses 'baptism' (ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) five times in homily 22 and thirteen times in homily 21, which makes a total of eighteen. Nine times, 'baptism' is used in the following phrases, which all occur once: "the spiritual writings of baptism" (ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܪ̈ܘܚܢܝܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[37] "purified sons of baptism" (ܒ̈ܢܝܐ ܕܟ̈ܝܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[38] "the mystery of baptism" (ܐܪܙܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[39] "the sweet spring of baptism" (ܢܒܥܐ ܚܠܝܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[40] "the tomb of baptism" (ܩܒܪܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[41] "the bosom of baptism" (ܥܘܒܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[42] "the glorious robe of baptism" (ܐܣܛܠܐ ܫܒܝܚܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[43] "the vat of baptism" (ܩܘܒܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[44] and "the birth of baptism" (ܝܠܕܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ).[45]

What is the meaning of 'baptism' in Narsai's homilies? Does it refer to 'baptism proper', to a larger rite, or to the whole of the rite of initiation? To solve this issue, it will be helpful to first let Narsai explain the meaning of baptism and then to explore in which part of the rite this meaning becomes realised. Concerning the meaning of baptism, Narsai elucidates:

> The Evil One and Death are undone by Baptism; and the resurrection of the body and the redemption of the soul are preached therein. In it, as in

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35   2,44:17–18 (2,14); *s* 2,174:23.

36   3,49:1 (3,1); *s* 3,180:4.

37   22,358:19; *s* :12.

38   22,358:24; *s* :15.

39   22,364:40; *s* :25.

40   21,341:1; *s* :1.

41   21,345:40; *s* :23–24.

42   21,346:18–19; *s* :10–11. Connolly translates "the bosom of the font", Gignoux (201) "fond du baptistère", Brouwers (194:185) "sein du baptême".

43   21,348:4–5; *s* :2–3.

44   21,349:14; *s* :8. ܩܘܒܐ may also have the meaning of 'cistern', 'bath', or 'font' (see Payne Smith, 107b). In this way, Gignoux (205) and Brouwers (198:280) translate "font baptismal" and "fonds baptismaux" respectively. However, another possible translation of ܩܘܒܐ is 'coffin' or 'sarcophagus' (Sokoloff, 357b). Hence, Narsai probably uses ܩܘܒܐ deliberately with this double connotation and Connolly's choice of "vat" seems to be an attempt to value both.

45   21,350:3; *s* :2.

a tomb, body and soul are buried, and they die and live (again) with a type of the resurrection that is to be at the end. It (Baptism) fills for men the office of the grave mystically; and the voice of the priesthood (is) as the voice of the trump in the latter end.[46]

Baptism has a double meaning, negative and positive: "The Evil One and Death are undone by Baptism; and the resurrection of the body and the redemption of the soul are preached therein". Narsai compares baptism with a tomb, a mystical grave, wherein "body and soul are buried". At the same time, baptism bears life as "a type of the resurrection that is to be at the end". By which ritual is this death and life realised? Narsai continues:

> In the grave of the water the priest buries the whole man; and he resuscitates him by the power of life that is hidden in his words. In the door of the tomb of Baptism he stands equipped, and he performs there a mystery of death and of the resurrection. With the voice openly he preaches the power of what he is doing how it is that a man dies in the water, and turns and lives again. He reveals and shews to him that is being baptized in whose name it is that he is to die and swiftly come to life.[47]

Narsai's account is very clear: death and life are effected by the water rite. In the "tomb of Baptism" the priest performs "a mystery of death and of the resurrection". Describing what actually happens during the water rite, Narsai says:

> Three times he bows his head at Their names, that he may learn the relation that while They are One They are Three. With a mystery of our Redeemer he goes into the bosom of the font (lit. 'of baptism') after the manner of those three days in the midst of the tomb. Three days was our Redeemer with the dead: so also he that is baptized:—the three times are three days. He verily dies by a symbol of that death which the Quickener of all died; and he surely lives with a type of the life without end. Sin and death he puts off and casts away in Baptism, after the manner of those garments which our Lord departing left in the tomb.[48]

Narsai compares the baptism of the candidate with the death and resurrection of the Lord. The three immersions refer to the three days in the tomb. Like the

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46   21,345:31–37; *s* :18–22.
47   21,345:38–346:5; *s* 345:22–346:3.
48   21,346:16–26; *s* :9–15.

Redeemer, who died and rose again, the baptizand "puts off and casts away" sin and death in baptism "and he surely lives with a type of the life without end". That 'baptism' refers to the water rite explicitly is further confirmed in another passage where Narsai compares baptism with a 'furnace' (italics mine):

> The debt of mankind the priest pays by means of his ministry; and the written bond of his race he washes out with the water and renews it (sc. his race). *As in a furnace*[49] *he re-casts bodies in Baptism*; and as in a fire he consumes the weeds of mortality. The drug of the Spirit he casts *into the water, as into a furnace*; and he purifies the image of men from uncleanness. By the heat of the Spirit he purges the rust of body and soul; and instead of clay they acquire the hue of heavenly beings. *The vat of water* he prepares, he sets, in the likeness of a furnace; and then he draws near and reveals the power of his art. With fair garments he covers his body outwardly, and the raiment of the Spirit adorns his soul within.[50]

Both 'baptism' and 'the water' are compared with 'a furnace', which shows that 'baptism' and the 'water' refer to the same ritual, that is, the water rite consisting of three immersions. In a similar way, "the vat of the water" (ܩܐܠܘܐ ܕܡܝܐ) is a synonymous expression of "the vat of baptism" (ܩܐܠܘܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ), Narsai uses elsewhere (see above), and further confirms the identification of 'baptism' as 'baptism proper'.

Nevertheless, we have to realise that our findings thus far are only based upon homily 21, wherein Narsai discusses the water rite itself. Therefore, before we draw our final conclusions, we also have to recount the meaning of 'baptism' in homily 22. But here also, 'baptism' is usually related to the water, as in:

> Come, let us examine the mystery of our dying in the midst of the waters; and let us look upon the wonder that is mystically achieved in us. Come, let us draw nigh to the treasurers of the Church's treasures, and let us hear from them how they give life by the water. Let us enter with them the mystical holy of holies, and let us learn from them the explanation of the mysteries of death and life. Death and life is the mystery of *Baptism*; and two things in one are performed therein by the hand of the priesthood.[51]

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49   Baptism(al font) as 'furnace' is a common Syriac symbol. See Brock, *Spirituality*, 63–64; Bernard, "Odes," 83.

50   21,343:33–344:5; *S* 343:20–344:3.

51   22,364:33–41; *S* :20–25. Italics mine. See further: 22,356:5–10 and 22,358:18–27.

Only once, the connection with the water is less direct. Narsai says concerning the *apotaxis* (italics mine):

> The Evil One he renounces as an evil one whose intercourse is evil, and his angels as haters of the word of truth. The Evil One and his adherents hate the word of truth; and it behoves him who loves the truth to hate them. 'Thy haters, O Lord, I have hated,' let him repeat with the son of Jesse; and let him exact of him (Satan) vengeance for the wrong (done to) the name of the Creator. A warfare has *he that approaches Baptism* with Satan and with his angels and with his service.[52]

We are informed here, that, during the *apotaxis*, the baptizand "approaches baptism" (ܡܩܪܒ ܠܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ).[53] Therefore, as he is still 'approaching', the candidate has not reached 'baptism' yet, but is still 'on the move'. Although we cannot pinpoint the exact meaning of 'baptism' here, the actual usage does not contradict the remaining, more lucid, occurrences which refer to the water rite.

The above review of the meaning of 'baptism' in homily 22 confirms, or at least harmonises with, the usage in homily 21. We may safely conclude now that Narsai is fully consistent in his use of 'baptism' as referring to the 'furnace of the waters' wherein man dies and is renewed by the heat of the Spirit and rises again as a new creation in a mystical way. 'Baptism' refers clearly to the water rite, consisting of three immersions, and not to a larger cluster of rituals, let alone the whole rite of initiation.

1.3 'Mystery/ies'

The Syriac word[54] ܐܪܙܐ is a rich term with a variety of meanings. Its root, ܐܪܙ, is a Persian loan word in Aramaic and Hebrew, stemming from the proto Aryan *rahas*.[55]

In the Old Testament, 'rāz appears for the first time in the Aramaic part of Daniel where it denotes the secret meaning of the dream that God reveals to

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52   22,359:32–39; *s* :18–24.

53   *s* 22,359:23. In the manuscript, ܡܩܪܒ is vocalized as a participle masculine singular: ܡܩܰܪܶܒ and expresses the thought that the candidate is 'approaching' and by consequence has not 'approached' baptism yet.

54   Also ܪܐܙܐ and ܪܙܐ. See Payne Smith, 524a.

55   Luke, "Rāzā'," 114; Kochuparampil, "Mystery Dimension," 88; Varghese, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 35.

Daniel.[56] Here, 'rāz concerns things formerly hidden, but now revealed to spe-
cially chosen individuals. "In its comprehensive sense 'rāz involves, then, the
realization of God's plan for the salvation of mankind, and in this sense it can
very well be defined as the working of his salvific will vis-à-vis humanity."[57] This
means that 'rāz has a strong eschatological flavour.

In the corpus found at Qumran, 'rāz occurs fifty-five times.[58] In the commen-
tary on Habakkuk (2:1ff.) 'rāz refers to the future of the chosen people which
has been revealed to the Teacher of Righteousness.[59] Like its use in Daniel, the
ultimate fulfilment of 'rāz is eschatological, "inseparably bound up with the
end of time and the salvation of the people, chosen people; it is known only
to God, who according to his good pleasure, discloses it to his specially chosen
mouthpieces, so that they may make it known to mankind at large".[60] Contrary
to its meaning in Daniel, however, 'rāz does not refer to a new and direct reve-
lation from God, but to a message already contained in the Scriptures.

Very probably, 'rāz is the Semitic term underlying the use of μυστήριον in
the New Testament.[61] This μυστήριον designates God's will, hidden for ages
(Col. 1:26), but now revealed in Christ "as a plan for the fullness of time, to
unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:10). In
this sense, μυστήριον refers to the 'drama of salvation history', the 'drama of
redemption', which is fundamental to understand the liturgical application of
the Syriac ܐܪܙܐ.[62]

Like μυστήριον,[63] the term ܐܪܙܐ can have a diversity of meanings, includ-
ing 'a secret', 'an agreement', 'a council', 'anything having a secret or mystical
meaning', 'mystical signification', 'a type', 'figure', 'sign', 'symbol', and 'likeness'.[64]
In a specific liturgical context, ܐܪܙܐ may refer to 'a mystery', 'sacrament', 'the
Holy Eucharist', or 'the mystical elements'.[65] This wider range of meanings is

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56 Dan. 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47; 4:6. Dan. 2:19 is typical: אֱדַ֙יִן֙ לְדָנִיֵּ֔אל בְּחֶזְוָ֥א דִֽי־לֵילְיָ֖א רָזָ֣ה גֲלִ֑י—
      "Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night."

57 Luke, "Rāzā," 117–118.

58 Ibid., 118.

59 Ibid., 118.

60 Ibid., 119.

61 Brock, *Hymns*, 42; cf. Brown, *Semitic Background*. The term μυστήριον is attested twenty-
      one times throughout the (Deutero-)Pauline epistles. Elsewhere in the New Testament,
      the term is found only in Mark 4:11 (and the synoptic parallels Matt. 3:11; Luk. 8:10) and
      four times in Revelation (1:20, 10:7, 17:5, 17:7).

62 Varghese, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 36.

63 Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 891b–893a.

64 Payne Smith, 28a, 524a; Varghese, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 36.

65 Payne Smith, 28a, 524a; Varghese, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 36.

reflected in the fourth-century writings of Aphrahat and Ephrem where ܐܪܙܐ may refer to any religious symbol[66] (especially Old Testament types), a liturgical mystery (sacramental rite), or, in the plural, to the Eucharist.[67] The meaning of the Syriac ܐܪܙܐ is therefore richer than the Latin *sacramentum*.[68]

We will now turn to the rites of Theodore and Narsai. The purpose of the following survey is not to perform an exhaustive scrutiny of ܐܪܙܐ as such in the homilies under consideration,[69] but to clarify in what way the use of the term ܐܪܙܐ and its plural ܐܪ̈ܙܐ adds to our understanding of the structure of the baptismal rite. In other words, we will explore the borders of ܐܪܙܐ/ܐܪ̈ܙܐ as a structural device; when does it start, when does it end?

1.3.1   *Theodore of Mopsuestia*

In Theodore's catechetical homilies, the original μυστήριον/μυστήρια is consistently translated as ܐܪܙܐ/ܐܪ̈ܙܐ.[70] The basic meaning of ܐܪܙܐ in Theodore's homilies is that of "a token of something promised; it is the token of the Kingdom of God".[71] The following passage is important for understanding the way Theodore employs ܐܪܙܐ/ܐܪ̈ܙܐ:

> Every mystery (ܐܪܙ) is an indication of unseen and unspeakable things through signs (ܐܬܘ̈ܬܐ) and emblems (ܐܪ̈ܙܐ). Such things require explanation and interpretation, for the sake of the person who draws nigh unto the mysteries (ܐܪ̈ܙܐ), so that he might know its power. If it only consisted of the (visible) elements themselves, words would have been useless, as sight itself would have been able to show us one by one all the happenings that take place, but since a mystery (ܐܪܙܐ) contains the signs (ܐܬܘ̈ܬܐ) of things that take place or have already taken place, words are needed to explain the power of signs (ܐܬܘ̈ܬܐ) and mysteries (ܐܪ̈ܙܐ).[72]

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66   It is worth noting that, unlike the modern-day usage, 'symbol' must be taken here in the strong sense with the symbol actually participating with the reality it symbolises (Beck, "Symbolum-Mysterium," 31; Brock, *Hymns*, 42; *Luminious Eye*, 41).

67   Beck, "Symbolum-Mysterium"; Varghese, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 38; Brock, *Hymns*, 42; *Luminous Eye*, 41, 56.

68   Varghese, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 36. For the development of *sacramentum* as a liturgical term and a comparison with μυστήριον, see Price, "Mysteries and Sacraments".

69   Bruns, *Himmel*, 324 rightly remarks that the comprehension of ܐܪܙܐ (μυστήριον) in Theodore's homilies is very complex. See T&D, 609 for an overview of the different possible meanings of ܐܪܙܐ. Cf. Mazza, *Mystagogy*, 46–49.

70   Mazza, *Mystagogy*, 46.

71   Varghese, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology*, 41.

72   1,17:24–33 (1,2); S 1,144:11–18.

For Theodore then, a 'mystery' (ܐܪܙ/ܐܪܙܐ) represents 'unseen and unspeak-able things' by means of 'signs (ܐܬܘܬܐ) and emblems (ܐܪܙܐ)'. In this way, the 'mystery' may designate the rite as a whole[73] (cf. the use of ܐܪܙܐ in the quotations below), "comprising both the visible aspect and the deeper reality".[74] The specific visible acts are called 'signs (ܐܬܘܬܐ) and emblems (ܐܪܙܐ)'. As in the case of 'baptism', Theodore draws a picture of movement concerning 'the mystery'. The candidate is constantly 'drawing near', until the mystery itself begins. But which ritual or cluster of rituals is meant here? Does it coincide with 'baptism', or does it constitute a larger rite? There are a few key passages in Theodore's homilies that deserve a closer look here.

At the beginning of homily 1, Theodore uses 'mystery' for the first time:

> As, however, the time of the mystery (ܐܪܙܐ) has drawn near, and you are by the grace of God about to participate in the holy baptism, it is right and necessary that we should explain before you the power of the mystery (ܐܪܙܐ) and of the ceremonies which are accomplished in it, and the reason for which each of them is accomplished, in order that when you have learnt what is the reason for all of them you may receive the things that take place with great love.[75]

This formulation seems to suggest that Theodore will explain the mystery right from the beginning of the first homily. Things are different, however, which becomes clear at the onset of homily 2 (italics mine):

> From what we have previously said, you have sufficiently understood the ceremonies which are duly performed, *prior to the mystery* (ܐܪܙܐ), and according to an early tradition, upon those who are baptised. ... It is right now that you should receive the teaching of the ceremonies that take place *in the mystery* (ܐܪܙܐ) *itself*, because if you learn the reason for each one of them, you will acquire a knowledge that is by no means small. After you have been taken away from the servitude of the Tyrant by means of the words of exorcism, and have made solemn engagements to God along with the recitation of the Creed, you draw near to *the mystery* (ܐܪܙܐ) *itself*; you must learn how this is done.[76]

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73   That is, the whole of the mystery/ies, not completely overlapping the 'whole baptismal rite', as we will show below.

74   Mazza, *Mystagogy*, 49.

75   1,17:16–23 (1,1); *s* 1,144:4–10.

76   2,35:13–36:4 (2,1); *s* 2,164:11–165:5.

Theodore distinguishes between ceremonies[77] which are performed "prior to the mystery" (ܩܕܡ ܐܪ̈ܙܐ)[78] and ceremonies which take place "in the mystery itself". The 'mystery' is preceded by the enrolment, the ceremony of exorcism, the profession of faith and a prayer. This suggests that the actual mystery starts with the *apotaxis*, the renunciation of the devil, the subsequent ritual Theodore explains. However, concerning the signing on the forehead after the *apotaxis* and *syntaxis*, Theodore says (italics mine):

> And he signs you on your forehead with the holy Chrism and says: "So-and-so is signed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He offers you *these firstfruits of the mysteries* (ܐܪ̈ܙܐ),[79] and he does it in no other way than in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Where you expect to find the cause of all the benefits, *there the priest also begins the mystery* (ܐܪ̈ܙܐ).[80]

Noteworthy is the statement that the priest begins (ܠܡܫܪܐ ܟܗܢܐ) the mystery "[w]here you expect to find the cause of all benefits". This 'cause' refers to the Trinity as expressed by the preceding triune formula. With the utterance of the threefold name of the Trinity during the signing, the mystery begins. The fact that the signing is called "the firstfruits of the mysteries" (ܪܫܝܬܐ ܕܐܪ̈ܙܐ) further confirms this view. Theodore uses ܪܫܝܬܐ in the normal sense[81] implying that the 'firstfruits' constitute the first part of the reality referred to. In this way, Christ is "risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that sleep (ܕܕܡܟܘ̈ܢ ܪܫܝܬܐ)".[82] And concerning the 'firstfruits of the Spirit' (ܪܫܝܬܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ), Theodore explains:

> He said, therefore, in another passage: "God has established us with you in Christ and anointed us and sealed us and given the earnest of His Spirit in our hearts." And again he said in another passage: "And not only

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77   Lit. 'things', ܣܠܡ (*s* 2,164:11; 165:1).

78   *s* 2,164:11.

79   *T&D* (397n2) propose to read the singular here, like in the quotation above. This emendation would make sense if Theodore were always to use the singular. However, as we have already mentioned before and also becomes visible by other quotations in the present section, Theodore employs both the singular and the plural concerning the whole collection of rituals that makes up the mystery/ies. Therefore, it does not seem necessary to read the singular here.

80   2,46:5–12 (2,17); *s* 2,176:23–177:4.

81   ܪܫܝܬܐ is the East Syrian form of ܪܫܝܬܐ. See Sokoloff, 1465b.

82   3,51:33–34 (3,5); *s* 3,183:19–20.

they but ourselves also which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we
ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption of children to
the redemption of our bodies." He uses the words "firstfruits of the Spirit
which we have here" to imply that, when we shall dwell in the joy of the
realities, we shall receive *all* the grace ...[83]

As the believer receives a part (beginning, firstfruits) of the Spirit now and will
receive all the grace in the resurrection, so the baptizand receives in the sign-
ing the beginning of the mystery and expects to enjoy all the mystery through
the following rituals and baptism proper in particular. With this specific truth
Theodore heartens the candidate after the signing (italics mine):

> After you have been singled out and stamped as a soldier of Christ our
> Lord you receive the *remaining part of the mysteries* (ܐܪ̈ܙܐ) and are
> invested with the *complete armour of the Spirit*, and with the mysteries
> (ܐܪ̈ܙܐ) you receive participation in the heavenly benefits.[84]

Within the context of baptism proper, Theodore offers some interesting confir-
mation of our findings thus far, this time from a more visual point of view:

> The priest stands up and approaches his hand, which he places on your
> head, and says: "So-and-so is baptised in the name of the Father, and of the
> Son and of the Holy Spirit," while wearing the aforesaid apparel which he
> wore when you were on your knees and he signed you on your forehead,
> and when he consecrated the water. It is in this apparel that he performs
> the gift of baptism, because it is right for him to perform all the mystery
> (ܟܠܗ ܐܪ̈ܙܐ) while wearing it,[85] as it denotes the renovation found in the
> next world, to which you will be transferred through this same mystery
> (ܐܪ̈ܙܐ).[86]

Two things are noteworthy here. First, we are informed that the priest wears
the same special garment during "all the mystery". Second, it is stated that the

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83   3,53:14–22 (3,7); *s* 3,185:7–13.
84   2,47:32–35 (2,20); *s* 2,178:25–179:1.
85   The passage "because it is right for him to perform all the mystery while wearing it" is ren-
     dered by *T&D* with: "parce qu'il convient que, durant tout ce sacrement, il fasse l'office en
     portant cet ornement". And *BS* has: "denn es ist geziemend, daß er während der ganzen
     Sakramenten(-spendung) mit diesem Gewand bekleidet seinen Dienst tut".
86   3,58:24–33 (3,14); *s* 3,191:14–20.

priest wore this same garment before during the signing and the consecration of the water. Indeed, earlier in his discourse, describing the signing on the forehead, Theodore reveals that the priest does not wear his "ordinary garments or the covering with which he was covered before", but instead "a robe of clean and radiant linen" which denotes "the joy of the world" to come.[87] This is the first time the priest appears, after the baptizand has recited the creed before him. During the *apotaxis* and *syntaxis*, the priest is not mentioned[88] and it is the deacons[89] who are responsible for this part of the rite. After the ritual of renunciation and adherence, the priest appears in his shining garment to initiate the mystery with the signing on the forehead. This mystery extends (at least) to the consecration of the water and baptism.

It is remarkable, however, that no mention is made of the anointing of the body, positioned in-between the signing and baptism. Does this imply that this anointing is not included in "all the mystery"? Of course, this would be rather odd and far from self-evident, especially because the anointing is introduced by the triune formula, which clearly indicates the sacramental character of the ritual.[90] What is more, this seems to contradict Theodore's own words that the priest "begins the mystery" with the signing[91] and, after the signing, the candidate will "receive the remaining part of the mysteries".[92] The most natural understanding of these words depicts the mystery as an uninterrupted sequence of rituals, beginning with the signing.

The easiest way to solve this apparent contradistinction is to suppose that Theodore 'accidentally' leaves out the anointing of the body. However, it is not particularly Theodore's habit to abridge. To the contrary, he is both renowned and notorious for his elaborate writing style.[93] It is not very likely, therefore, that Theodore would have accidentally skipped one out of four liturgical mysteries.

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87   2,45:31–38 (2,17); *s* 2,176:12–19.
88   Which does not mean that he was absent (see §5.1.1).
89   Syriac: ܡܫܡܫܢܐ. 2,37:25 (2,5); *s* 2,166:26.
90   See the quotation below.
91   2,46,12 (2,17); *s* 2,177:3–4.
92   2,47:33 (2,20); *s* 2,178:26.
93   For example Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 166 'complains': "Theodore has many merits, but conciseness is not one of them. His work occupies a disproportionate amount of space in this book, and the imbalance would have been even more pronounced if I had not allowed myself a certain liberty in removing some of his repetitions. Many otiose adjectives and similar insignificant flourishes have been dropped without indication." But see my comment on p. 16n85.

Another approach seems more promising. If we take Theodore's words seriously that the priest wears the same garment only during the signing, the consecration of the water and baptism proper, we face the possibility that it is not the priest himself, but another person who performs the anointing.[94] But do we have any support for such a claim? Let us consider Theodore's description of the actual performance of the ritual:

> While you are receiving this anointing, the one who has been found worthy of the honour of priesthood begins and says: "So-and-so is anointed in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." And then the persons appointed for this service anoint all your body.[95]

It is noteworthy that Theodore, contrary to his habit, does not explicitly speak of "the priest" (ܟܗܢܐ)[96] who utters the triune formula, but of "the one who has been found worthy of the honour of priesthood" (ܗܘ ܐܫܬܘܝ ܗܘ ܕܐܫܬܘܝ ܠܗ ܐܝܩܪܐ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ). In order to clarify whether we may identify the latter with the former, we first have to illuminate the identity of the ܟܗܢܐ.

Curtin has rightly remarked that Theodore uses neither ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ, "which matches the Greek ἐπίσκοπος and which clearly would identify him as a bishop",[97] nor ܩܫܝܫ, the equivalent of πρεσβύτερος.[98] The word he uses, ܟܗܢܐ (ἱερεύς), 'priest', normally meant 'bishop' in the second half of the fourth century and in the fifth.[99] This would identify the ܟܗܢܐ as the bishop, which matches the general observation that baptism was normally ministered by the bishop, although it could by a presbyter or deacon.[100] Additional support for

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94   Theoretically, there is still another possibility, viz. that the priest does not wear his special garment during the anointing of the body. However, apart from the practical problems—there is hardly enough time for the priest to change his clothes between the anointing of the body and baptism as these constitute an unceasing sequence of rituals—this would deny the sacramental character of this ritual, which, as stated before, is not very convincing.

95   3,54:28–32 (3,8); s 3,186:20–23.

96   Or 'he', where it is clear that the priest is meant.

97   See Sokoloff, 86b.

98   Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 165. Compare Payne Smith, 522b. Only once, Theodore uses ܐܦܣܩܘܦܘܬܐ and ܩܫܝܫܘܬܐ concerning the heretics, about which he exclaims: "Angels of Satan are those who in all heresies are the heads and the teachers of error, whether they be honoured with the name of episcopacy (ܐܦܣܩܘܦܘܬܐ) or of priesthood (ܩܫܝܫܘܬܐ)" (2,40:31–33 (2,9); s 2,170:16–18). Normally, however, Theodore's homilies speak of ܟܗܢܐ and ܟܗܢܘܬܐ.

99   *EEC*, s.v. "Priesthood".

100 See *EEC*, s.v. "Sacraments" (cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 541n33). See especially Finn, *Liturgy*

this view comes from Theodore's description of the ܟܘܡܪܐ as "the majordomo
… who has been found worthy to preside over (ܩܘܡܐ ܒܪܝܫܐ) the Church"[101]
and his remark, concerning the Eucharist, that the ܟܘܡܪܐ fulfils "a role of a
high priest".[102] Therefore, with some restraint, we may identify the ܟܘܡܪܐ with
the bishop.[103]

The next issue we have to deal with is the identity of "the one who has been
found worthy of the honour of priesthood" (ܗܘ ܕܐܬܝܩܪ ܒܐܝܩܪܐ ܕܟܘܡܪܘܬܐ
ܐܝܟܢ ܕܗܘ). Is he the bishop himself (ܟܘܡܪܐ), or someone else, maybe
a presbyter?[104] A number of passages are worth considering here. In the first
homily about the Eucharist, Theodore mentions the priestly greeting "peace be
unto you" uttered by the bishop and remarks that it "is suitable to begin with
this phrase every service that takes place in a Church gathering, and especially
this awe-inspiring service which is about to be performed".[105] After he has dis-
cussed the Pauline base of this custom, Theodore continues:

> There is an ordinance, found (in the Church) from the beginning, to the
> effect that all those who have been deemed worthy to do the work of
> priesthood, should begin all the functions performed in a Church assem-
> bly with the above phrase, which is more than anything else suitable to
> this awe-inspiring service.[106]

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of Baptism, 18–21, 126, and 168. Finn remarks that in the time of Chrysostom (which is
also the time of Theodore) "there was not yet a settled terminology for referring to priest
and bishop, and perhaps not a fully articulated distinction between them. Although both
priest and deacon could administer baptism when necessary … the bishop was normally
the minister of solemn baptism." (p. 168). Finn (p. 126) also brings forward that although
Chrysostom uses ἱερεύς for both priest and bishop, the singular usually refers to the latter.
He adds that "We find the same use of "the priest" for the bishop in Theodore of Mop-
suestia" (p. 126). The latter is also confirmed by Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, 40n1, who
remarks that "In all probability the *priest* in Theodore and Chrysostom is the bishop, not
the presbyter."

101   1,34:4–5 (1,27); *s* 1,162:26–163:1. According to Payne Smith, 494b, ܩܘܡ ܒܪܝܫܐ means "to be
chief, to rule" (in this case with the variant spelling ܒܪܝܫ without ܐ and the suffix ܗ). *T&D*:
"… qui a obtenu la faveur de se tenir à la tête de l'Église."; *BS*: "… der gewürdigt wurde, der
Kirche vorzustehen."

102   XV,82:24 (15,19); *s* XV,218:22–23. 'Role' = lit. 'image', 'figure', 'likeness' (ܕܡܘܬܐ; cf. Payne
Smith, 190b). See also XV,83:26–33 (XV,21).

103   *T&D* translate with 'pontife', but *BS* with "Priester" (e.g. 3,14–15).

104   *BS* translates, like Mingana, literally "der mit der priesterlichen Würde Ausgezeichnete"
(3,8), while *T&D* identify 'the priest' as 'the bishop': "celui à qui est échue la dignité pontif-
icale."

105   XV,89:31–34 (XV,34); *s* XV,227:12–14.

106   XV,90:16–21 (XV,35); *s* XV,228:3–6.

With "the above phrase" Theodore refers to the earlier mentioned priestly greeting "peace be unto you". What is of interest here is that Theodore remarks that "all those who have been deemed worthy to do the work of priesthood" (ܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܫܬܘܝܘ ܕܢܣܥܪܘܢ ܥܒܕܐ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ) should begin every Church assembly (not only the Eucharist) with such a greeting. As it is not to be expected that 'the bishop' leads every (common) service, the phrase "all those who have been deemed worthy to do the work of priesthood" probably refers to both presbyters and bishops. If this is true, 'priesthood' (ܟܗܢܘܬܐ) does not refer to 'the order of bishops', but instead refers to a more general class of those 'consecrated to the sacerdotal order', that is presbyters and bishops.[107] This seems to be confirmed by the following. Theodore mentions that, before the offering of the Eucharist, "the priest" (the bishop) washes his hands first "and then all those … who are counted in the assembly of priesthood" (ܒܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ).[108] It is obvious here that "priesthood" cannot refer to the bishop alone, but certainly includes the presbyters involved in the mystery (although it is uncertain if the bishop himself is included here).

We may turn back now to the question of the identity of "the one who has been found worthy of the honour of priesthood" (ܗܘ ܕܐܫܬܘܝ، ܠܐܝܩܪܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܐܝܩܪܐ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ). Since 'priesthood' most likely refers to the sacerdotal order, consisting of the bishop and the presbyters, it could be the bishop as well as a presbyter who utters the triune formula related to the full body anointing. What pleads for a presbyter is (a) that Theodore normally uses 'priest' (ܟܗܢܐ) or 'he' to denote the bishop and, most importantly, (b) that this choice enables us to accept Theodore's account concerning the mystery as it stands, that is, that the bishop is indeed only personally involved in the signing, the consecration of the water, and baptism (and the post-baptismal signing, see below). The strength of this position is that we do not have to postulate any secondary hypothesis to explain the 'missing' anointing of the body.

But we may even go a step further and ask ourselves the question whether there is any good reason *why* the bishop would not perform the anointing of the body and leave this ritual to a presbyter? Les us consider the following. Firstly, Theodore neither explicitly says that the candidates witnessed the consecration of the water, nor describes the actual performance of this ritual. He only mentions that the candidates are allowed to enter the pool "[w]hen the water has been *perfected*".[109] This is a remarkable phenomenon in a cat-

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107   So, *T&D* who translate with "sacerdoce" (e.g. XV,35) and "sacerdotale" (e.g. XV,42). Cf. *EEC*, s.v. "Priesthood".

108   XV,94:15–17 (XV,42); *S* XV,232:11–12.

109   3,56:31 (3,10); *S* 3,189:8 (Mingana has 'prepared', but see p298n19). Day, *Baptismal Liturgy*

echetical homily that has it as its aim to inform the baptizands concerning the liturgical mysteries "what it is and how it is performed".[110] Therefore, we get the impression here that the candidates did not witness the blessing of the water.[111] Secondly, that the candidates were only allowed to enter the pool after the 'preparation' of the water, indicates that the blessing occurred shortly before baptism.[112] The proposal of Finn, following Daniélou, "that the font was blessed on the Epiphany",[113] months before baptism, makes nonsense of Theodore's remark that the baptizands enter the font "[w]hen the water has been perfected", since, in that case, this condition had already been fulfilled even before the enrolment. Additional support for a consecration of the water shortly before baptism is provided by Theodore's mention that the bishop wears the same 'apparel' during baptism as he wore during the signing on the forehead and the consecration of the water and so "performs all the mystery while wearing it".[114] This way of speaking suggests that all the rituals mentioned, including the blessing of the water, are performed within the same time frame. Moreover, the same phrase even seems to provide a chronological indication as to when the consecration occurred: after the signing, but before baptism. All taken together, then, it seems plausible that the bishop was not present at the anointing of the body, because he was occupied with another ritual, viz. the blessing (consecration) of the water. This proposal

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of Jerusalem, 88 rightly ascertains "that the bishop immerses the candidates wearing the same vestments as for the pre-immersion anointing, but does not explicitly state that the consecration took place between these two acts." Varghese, Onctions, 96n32 seems to have a slight preference for the order of an anointing of the body followed by the consecration of the water, but affirms that this choice is debatable as the text does not explicitly pinpoint the moment of consecration. Riley, Christian Initiation, 148n20 contends that the "only indication as to when this consecration of the baptismal water took place is the notation of Theodore that in undertaking it the bishop wore the same garment which he had changed into for the first or "sphragis" anointing concluding the ceremony of renunciation and commitment … and which he is still wearing for the baptism itself." Although Riley's observation concerning the bishop's garment as such is correct, I think that there are some more starting points as to where to locate the consecration of the water as I will argue below.

110 1,34:19 (1,28); s 1,163:11.

111 In this way, we also avoid the somewhat odd scenario that the candidates would have witnessed the consecration while standing naked before the font. Cf. Day, Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem, 88.

112 s 3,189:8: ܡܝܐ ܕܐܬܬܩܢܘ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܝܐ. The combination ܡܐ ܕ may be translated with 'when', see Sokoloff, 700a. T&D and BS translate with "quand" and "sobald" respectively.

113 Finn, Liturgy of Baptism, 156. Finn's proposal may be valid for Chrysostom's rite, but certainly not for Theodore's.

114 3,58:26–31 (3,14); s 3,191:15–19.

acknowledges the position of the consecration and explains why the candidates did not witness this ritual.[115]

To sum up, there are good reasons to accept Theodore's account concerning the liturgical vestment as it stands, viz. that the full body anointing is not mentioned because the bishop himself is not involved in that particular ritual. We have seen that the description of the minister of the ritual may refer to a presbyter.[116] Moreover, we even found a motive for the bishop's absence during the whole body anointing in his blessing the water at the same time. As a consequence, the exclusion of the whole body anointing from the expression "all the mystery" does not deny its nature as a liturgical mystery, but is best taken, then, as a subjective remark from the perspective of the bishop; he wears the special attire during *each* liturgical mystery *he* performs (without necessarily claiming that he performs *every* ritual).

The above makes clear that the mystery certainly comprises the signing on the forehead, the anointing of the body, the consecration of the water and baptism proper. This only leaves open the status of the post-baptismal signing, since this ritual is also not mentioned by Theodore as part of the phrase "all the mystery". We will argue below that there are no good reasons to doubt the authenticity of the post-baptismal signing.[117] The question remains, therefore, how this ritual is related to the preceding liturgical mysteries. It is important to note that

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115   Brock, "Transition," 215 suggests concerning the Antiochene rite that, if the signing and the anointing of the body were separated in time, the consecration of the water was positioned in between. This is an interesting possibility. Of course, it requires the two anointings being separated in time, which is not easily established. To the contrary, there are no indications in Theodore's homilies that they were. But more importantly, it is my conviction that my position does the most justice to the sparse clues present and offers a satisfying explanation as to why the anointing of the body is not mentioned as an act of the bishop. Interestingly, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite attests a similar, but slightly different, practice with the bishop initiating the ritual by uttering the triune formula and leaving the anointing to the priests while he himself consecrates the water: "When the ministers have entirely unclothed him, the priests bring the holy oil of the anointing. Then he [the bishop, NW] begins the anointing with a threefold sealing, and for the rest assigns the man to the priests for the anointing of his whole body, while he himself advances to the mother of filial adoption, and when he has purified the water within it by the holy invocations and perfected it by three cruciform effusions of the most pure Chrism and by the same number of injections of the most holy Chrism, and has invoked the sacred melody of the inspiration of the God-absorbed prophets, he orders the man to be brought forward" (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* II,2.7; ed. Heil & Ritter, *Ecclesiastica hierarchia*, 72; tr. Whitaker, 61). Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 261 suggests an identical practice for Theodore's rite (without substantiation, unfortunately).

116   I therefore disagree with Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 254, who identifies him as the bishop.

117   See p. 80 ff.

the signing does not confer something new, like the gift of the Spirit, but 'just' confirms the reception of it by baptism,[118] as Theodore contends (italics mine):

> When (the priest) signs you he says: "So-and-so is signed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," so that it may be an indication and a sign to you that it is in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit *that the Holy Spirit descended on you also, and you were anointed and received grace*;[119] and He will be and remain with you, as it is through Him that you possess now the firstfruits.[120]

It is also clear that the signing is properly understood as a liturgical mystery as it is accompanied with the triune formula. I suggest, therefore, that Theodore did not include this ritual in the phrase "all the mystery", since he only mentioned, at that particular point in his account, the rituals discussed 'thus far'.[121]

Although, as the above quotations clearly show, ܐܪܙܐ/ܐܪܙܐ basically concerns the whole cluster of liturgical mysteries, it is noteworthy that only one ritual is particularly called a ܐܪܙܐ and that is baptism proper. For example:

> You should now proceed towards baptism in which the symbols of this second birth are performed … through this awe-inspiring mystery (ܐܪܙܐ) …[122]
> For this it is necessary that the priest should have beforehand made use of clear words, according to the rite of the priestly service, and asked God that the grace of the Holy Spirit might come on the water and impart to it the power both of conceiving that awe-inspiring child and becoming a womb to the sacramental (ܐܪܙܐ) birth.[123]

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118   Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 99–100. Varghese himself rejects the authenticity of the post-baptismal signing. See the discussion below.

119   Syriac: ܐܦ ܥܠܝܟ ܐܬܐ ܪܘܚܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܘܐܬܡܫܚܬ ܘܩܒܠܬ ܠܛܝܒܘܬܐ (*S* 3,202: 23–24). As the perfect tenses of ܐܬܐ and ܘܐܬܡܫܚܬ make clear, the conferring of the Spirit is rightfully interpreted here as a past event. *T&D* translate: "l' Esprit-Saint aussi est venu sur toi, et que tu en fus oint, et que tu (le) reçus par la grâce". And *BS* has: "daß auch auf dich der Heilige Geist gekommen ist und du gesalbt wurdest und ihn aus Gnade empfangen hast".

120   3,68:26–32 (3,27); *S* 3,202:21–25.

121   Remember that the phrase is uttered concerning baptism proper; the post-baptismal signing has not been discussed up to that point.

122   3,49:28–3,50:6 (3,2); *S* 3,181:5–20.

123   3,55:2–7 (3,9); *S* 3,187:5–8. See also 3,57:33–58:2 (3,12; *S* 3,190:15–18), 3,69:3–6 (3,28; *S* 3,203:4–7) and 3,69:28–30 (3,29; *S* 3,204:1–3).

As we will see later on, this phenomenon harmonises with Theodore's general baptismal mystagogy. Although the mystery as a whole encompasses a number of rituals, baptism proper is still the central liturgical mystery. It is *the* awe-inspiring mystery, *the* ritual through which the sacramental birth is realised by the action of the Holy Spirit. Or to use another picture: the signing is 'the firstfruits', baptism the full harvest. Theodore even speaks of 'the mystery of baptism' (italics mine):

> The good things that (God) prepared for us, through the Economy of Christ our Lord, are likewise invisible and unspeakable, and since it is in their hope that we draw near to Him and receive *the mystery* (ܐܪܙܐ) *of baptism* ...[124]

This leads us to an issue we left in abeyance for some time: the meaning of the phrases 'the mystery of baptism' (ܐܪܙܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ),[125] and 'the oil of baptism' (ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ).[126] How may we interpret the former? As we have seen, 'baptism' normally refers to 'baptism proper'. 'Mystery', on the other hand, may have a broad or a narrow meaning. Does 'baptism' narrow down the meaning of 'mystery' here, or does 'mystery' broaden the meaning of 'baptism'? At face value, the first option seems to have preference, since it does justice to the common use of both terms, while the second option would confront us with an exceptional expansion of the semantic field of 'baptism'. Two additional arguments sustain this first impression. (a) Several times, baptism proper is called a 'mystery', as the above makes clear. Besides the phrase under consideration, 'mystery' in the broader sense is never called 'baptism'. (b) The close context supports a narrow definition and runs thus (italics mine):

> The addition "And I believe" is necessary because the person who draws near to God ought to believe that He is, as the blessed Paul said. As Divine nature is invisible, faith is called to the help of the person who draws near to it, and who promises to be constantly in its household. The good things that (God) prepared for us, through the Economy of Christ our Lord, are likewise invisible and unspeakable, and since it is in their hope that we draw near to Him and receive *the mystery of baptism*, faith is required so

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124   2,44:14–18 (2,14); *s* 2,174:20–23.

125   Only once: 2,44:17–18 (2,14); *s* 2,174:23.

126   Only once: 3,49:1 (3,1); *s* 3,180:3.

that we may possess a strong belief without doubt concerning these good things which are prepared for us and which are now invisible.

You add also the sentence "and I am baptised" to that of "and I believe" so that you may draw near to the gift of *the holy baptism*, in the hope of future benefits, and be thus enabled to be reborn and to die with Christ and rise with Him from there, and so that after having received another birth, instead of your first one, you may be able to participate in heaven. As long as you are mortal by nature you are not able to enter the abode of heaven, but after you have cast away such a nature in *baptism* and have risen also with Christ through *baptism*, and received the symbol of the new birth which we are expecting, you will be seen as a citizen of heaven and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven.[127]

In this larger context, 'baptism' is used four times, three of which clearly refer to baptism proper. Without any compelling argument to the contrary, it seems most natural to interpret 'baptism' in 'the mystery of baptism' in the same way. Therefore, we conclude that 'the mystery of baptism' pertains to the water rite, the centre of the liturgical mysteries.

The 'oil of baptism' refers to the oil used for the signing on the forehead. Does this phrase imply that the signing is a part of a larger rite called 'baptism'? Again, 'baptism' is normally used with the meaning of 'baptism proper'. Of course, this may not exclude exceptions. Maybe Theodore broadens the semantic field of 'baptism' here. There is, however, another way to approach this matter. The whole rite, from the registration onwards, has been shaped around the font. It is baptism proper that gives meaning to all preceding rituals. Everything looks forward to and comes together in the water rite. Starting with the signing, we set foot on sacramental ground and the candidate receives the firstfruits of the mystery. Within such a sacramental atmosphere, it makes complete sense to speak of 'oil of baptism'. Not because the signing as such is 'baptism' or a part of 'baptism', but because it receives its full meaning only in relation to the water rite.

To sum up our findings with regard to the use of ܪܐܙܐ/ܪܐܙܐ in Theodore, we may say that the plural and the singular basically refer to the whole cluster of liturgical mysteries from the signing on the forehead to the post-baptismal signing. The synonymity of the singular and the plural is illustrated by the phrases

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127   2,44:10–32; S 2,174:16–175:11.

"firstfruits of the mystery (ܐܪܙܐ)" and "firstfruits of the mysteries (ܐܪܙܐ)", both used concerning the signing on the forehead.[128] Varghese may be right that the singular refers to the mystery as a whole and the plural to the collection of rituals (mysteries).[129] At the same time we have seen that the singular may also refer to baptism.[130]

1.3.2   *Narsai of Nisibis*

Like Theodore, Narsai uses both the singular ܐܪܙܐ and the plural ܐܪܙܐ. But unlike his master he does not use the singular to refer to 'the whole of the mystery', consisting of several different rituals. Instead, Narsai employs only the plural to denote the sum of mystical events. In this way he speaks of "the hour of the mysteries" (ܥܕܢ ܐܪܙܐ).[131] Which rituals are meant here? A key passage for understanding Narsai's use of ܐܪܙܐ is the following (italics mine):

> The cause of the signing on the forehead is (that it may be) for the confusion of the devils; that when they discern (it) on the head of a man they may be overcome by him (*or* it). On account of these (the devils) are performed *the mysteries* (ܐܪܙܐ) *of the oil and water*, that they may be an armour against their warfare and attacks.[132]

For Narsai, the oil and the water, the anointing and baptism are 'the mysteries'. Although he uses the expression 'the mysteries of the oil and water' only once, the way he speaks of 'oil and water' elsewhere makes clear that Narsai has these rituals in view when he speaks of 'mysteries' without further qualification. So he says (italics mine):

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128   For the singular see 2,45:29 (2,16); *s* 176:10; for the plural see 2,46:9 (2,17); *s* 2,176:24–177:1. In case of the latter, *T&D*, 379n2 propose to read ܐܪܙܐ instead of ܐܪܙܐ, but this proposal only seems motivated by an inclination to harmonisation, which is neither convincing nor necessary.

129   Varghese, *Onctions*, 101. But see n34.

130   In one instance the plural is used within the context of baptism: "You are, however, not allowed to speak at the time of baptism, as it is right for you to receive the renewal through the mysteries (ܐܪܙܐ), when you are baptised, in silence and fear …" (3,62:33–36 (3,18); *s* 3,196:4–6). It is unclear, however, whether the first referent of "the renewal through the mysteries" is baptism or the liturgical mystery as a whole. Both are possible and maybe the two cannot be distinguished here (which would confirm the function of baptism as the ritual centre).

131   22,363:18 (*s* :11); 22,366:36 (*s* :22). ܥܕܢ ܐܪܙܐ may also be translated as 'time of the mysteries', see Payne Smith, 401b and Sokoloff, 1073a.

132   22,366:21–27; *s* :13–16.

> Oil and water he lays first as a foundation, and by his words he completes (and) builds the name of the Divinity. With *liquid oil and weak water* he re-casts the body; and instead of clay he changes (and) makes (it) pure gold.[133]

And:

> The rust of passions had defaced the beauty of our excellence; and He turned again and painted us in spiritual colours which may not be effaced. Cunningly He mixed the colours for the renewal of our race, with *oil and water* and the invincible power of the Spirit. A new art the Chief Artist put forth; that men should be depicting men without draftsmanship.[134]

As these passages demonstrate, the twins of oil and water are the visible instruments by which man becomes renewed. This restoration is effectuated by the Spirit that bestows power upon 'common water'[135] and 'feeble oil'.[136] The priest is the mediator,[137] the minister "of the Mysteries, to whom is committed the treasury of the Spirit to dispense".[138] By his utterance of the three Names of the Divinity, he consecrates both the oil[139] and the water[140] and he signs[141] and baptises[142] the candidate in these same three Names. There is no doubt, in Narsai's liturgy the oil and the water are the mysteries and the *only* mysteries of the baptismal rite.[143]

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133   22,365:29–33; *s* :17–19.

134   21,341:7–13; *s* :5–9. See further 22,366:10–15 and 22,363:25–27.

135   21,342:19–20; *s* :11–12.

136   22,368:4–7; *s* :3–5.

137   22,357:14–15; 22,367:31–32; 21,343:22–23; 21,345:19.

138   22,362:3–4; *s* :2–3.

139   22,365:38–40; *s* :22–23.

140   21,345:24–26; *s* :14–15.

141   22,367:25–29; *s* :14–17.

142   21,346:6–15; *s* :3–9.

143   One phrase in homily 22, however, appears to challenge our contention that the anointing and baptism are the only mysteries. Concerning the Lawsuit, Narsai says: "As in a lawsuit the priest stands at the hour of the Mysteries (ܐ̈ܪܙܐ ܒܥܕܢ)" (22,363:6–7; *s* :3) and "Two things he [the baptizand, NW] depicts by his kneeling down at the hour of the Mysteries (ܐ̈ܪܙܐ ܒܥܕܢ)" (22,363:17–18; *s* :10–11). Does this imply that Narsai also considers the Lawsuit as a 'mystery'? It is important to note that ܥܕܢ may have the meaning of 'time', 'season', especially 'a convenient season', 'fit' or 'right time' (Payne Smith, 401b). In this sense, ܐ̈ܪܙܐ ܒܥܕܢ could be interpreted as the special time frame wherein the mysteries take place, without claiming that everything that happens within this time period is of necessity a 'mystery'.

The singular ⟨ܐܪܙܐ⟩, however, seems reserved for baptism (italics mine):

> Death and life is the *mystery* (⟨ܐܪܙܐ⟩) *of Baptism*; and two things in one are performed therein by the hand of the priesthood.[144]

Since the single anointing is never spoken of in this way, we get the impression that Narsai considers baptism as *the* mystery. Despite the anointing and baptism being twins, the latter is the firstborn, so to speak, and therefore gets more weight.

1.4   'Initiation' and 'Baptismal Rite'

Thus far, we have examined and defined the basic units or, so to speak, the inner circles of 'baptism' and 'mystery/ies'. From this centre we may draw the still larger circles of what is commonly called 'initiation' and 'baptismal rite'.[145] As mentioned in the introduction of the present chapter, however, there is no strong consensus in liturgical scholarship concerning their specific meaning or mutual relationship. Sometimes the terms are used as mere synonyms, other times 'initiation' refers to the whole process (including the catechumenate) and 'baptismal rite' to the liturgy. Therefore, in order to define and employ these common and useful terms in a responsible way, we have to scrutinise how they relate to the rites as described in our sources.

Having ascertained this, we are confronted with the difficulty that neither Theodore nor Narsai uses such terms as 'initiation'[146] and 'baptismal rite'. Accordingly, any attempt to demarcate these terms by word studies is a useless enterprise. Hence, we must of necessity approach this issue from another angle.

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144   22,364:40–365:1; *s* 364:24–365:1. See also 21,342:10–14; *s* :7–8 and 21,345:40–42; *s* :23–24.

145   Also 'baptism' is regularly used to indicate a larger cluster of rituals. But since this term is reserved for the water rite in our sources, we leave it out of account here.

146   In a few instances Mingana translates ⟨ܬܠܡܝܕܘܬܐ⟩ with 'initiation' in the phrases "initiation of baptism" (x,104:10 [x,1]; *s* x,224:13) and "initiation and baptism" (x,105:5–6 [x,2]; *s* x,11–12 and x,111:9 [x,13]; *s* x,111:11). In a footnote Mingana remarks concerning ⟨ܬܠܡܝܕܘܬܐ⟩: "Evidently the author refers sometimes by this word to the 'catechumenate' or the state of the 'Catechumens' who were taught the principles of the Christian faith before their baptism. I have rendered it a few times by 'initiation,' 'teaching,' 'discipleship.'" (Vol. 5, 104n2). The larger context of both phrases concerns the confession of the Spirit side by side with the Father and the Son. It is equally possibly, and probably even better, to translate ⟨ܬܠܡܝܕܘܬܐ⟩ here with 'instruction' or 'catechesis'. So do *T&D*: "catéchèse" and "dans la catéchèse et au baptême" and *BS*: "Taufunterweisung", "in der Unterweisung und in der Taufe".

In the case of 'initiation' we will take as a starting point a broadly accepted definition and investigate how it relates to our sources and in what way it will be applicable to the specific rites under consideration. We will gratefully turn to account here the insights of the fields of anthropology and religious studies. As regards 'baptismal rite', we shall inquire if and, if so, how this term may be used with reference to the rites of Theodore and Narsai.

1.4.1   *Initiation and the Eucharist*

A regularly used and generally accepted definition of 'initiation' is that of the historian of religions Mircea Eliade: "a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person to be initiated".[147] In this sense, 'initiation' is much more than 'baptism' as defined by our sources; it encompasses the whole process of rituals and instructions ('oral teachings') which realise the resocialisation of the person, starting with the catechumenate.[148]This process was characterised by an increasing separation from 'the world' and an incorporation into the new community of the Church.[149]

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147   Eliade, *Rites and Symbols*, 18 (Cf. *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Initiation"). After this regularly cited definition, Eliade continues with the following important remark: "In philosophical terms, initiation is equivalent to a basic change in existential condition; the novice emerges from his ordeal endowed with a totally different being from that which he possessed before his initiation; he has become *another*." Mitchell, *Meaning of Ritual*, 23 calls Eliade's definition "the best general definition of initiation". Some other examples of the many sources that use Eliade's definition are: Johnson, *Religious Experience*, 72n15; Martinez, *Signs of Freedom*, 117; Mitchell, *Praying Shapes Believing*, 88, 92; Regan, *Experience the Mystery*, 113.

148   For initiation as 'resocialisation', see Kreider, *Change of Conversion*, 21; Meeks, *Origins of Christian Morality*, 18–36. For initiation as a process, see Martinez, *Signs of Freedom*, 117; Regan, *Experience the Mystery*, 113; Mitchell, *Meaning of Ritual*, 85, and his *Praying Shapes Believing*, 92.

149   This whole process of initiation is also generally understood as a 'rite of passage' ('rite de passage'), a phrase borrowed from the field of anthropology and first used by Van Gennep in his classical study *Rites of Passage*, esp. 10–11, 93–95 and further developed by Victor Turner. "Rites of passage are a category of rituals that mark the passage of a person through the life cycle, from one stage to another over time, from one role or social position to another, integrating the human and cultural experiences with biological destiny: birth, reproduction, and death." (*Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Rites of Passage"). Commonly, such a 'rite of passage' has a three-part structure: rites of separation (or preliminal rites), transition rites (or liminal rites), and rites of incorporation (postliminal rites). (For a balanced discussion of the concept of 'rite of passage', see *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Rites of Passage". Cf. Grimes, "Liturgical Supinity," 161 for some criticism.) These insights from the field of anthropology are certainly helpful and (partially) applicable to Christian initiation as well, yielding the following picture: 1) entrance into the catechu-

In the fourth century, this journey usually—but not always necessarily—consisted of the following stages. First, the person was evangelised, usually through personal contact with individual Christians. Second, after an examination and approval, the person was admitted to the catechumenate.[150] Third, those desiring and being ready for baptism were formally enrolled after an examination of the candidate's behaviour and intentions. Now, the catechumens had attained 'advanced standing' and were called φωτιζόμενοι, 'those being illuminated' (East), *competentes*, 'petitioners' (West), or *electi*, 'chosen ones' (Rome).[151] During this time of enlightenment the candidates were intensively instructed and prepared for the final rituals of initiation, culminating in baptism. In the fourth century, this period of final preparation happened during Lent and normally focused on the creed.[152] Fourth, after having received

menate (separation), 2) the catechumenate and election for baptism (transition), and 3) the baptismal rite (incorporation) (Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, xvii ff.; Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection*, 363, 372; Walsh, *Sacraments of Initiation*, esp. pp. 90–92). However, some caution is needed here. Within anthropological and ritual studies, a rite of passage generally concerns "initiating people who *already* belong in some way to the community into a new level of membership of status within that same community. *Christian* rites of 'initiation' however, are about 'conversion' and 'faith'. They are about entering a *new* community to which one did *not* belong before, even by birth, for Christians, in the words of Tertullian in the early third century, are 'made, not born'. The anthropological analogy with the 'rites of passage,' therefore, is only partially true in the case of the Christian rites" (Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, xix). Cf. Walsh, *Sacraments of Initiation*, 91.

150   It must be noted that many catechumens never advanced further since the "catechumenate was the customary status of the nominal Christian, the one who lacked the courage for baptism but was ashamed to be called a heathen" (Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 357 in Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 59; see also Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 43 ff.). On the catechumenate and the challenges facing it in the fourth century, see Dujarier, *History of the Catechumenate*; Kreider, *Change of Conversion*, 21–22, 40–42; Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, esp. 39–78; Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 115–120, 201–218; Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 55–68; *Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Catechumen, Catechumenate". Cf. Van Geest, "Mystagogy of the Fathers," 10–13.

151   Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 62–63. This terminology was not universally employed, however. John Chrysostom e.g. never uses φωτιζόμενοι but uses instead phrases like οἱ μέλλοντες μυσταγωγεῖσθαι and οἱ μέλλοντες φωτίζεσθαι. See Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 32, 33n81.

152   After the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea, Lent makes a sudden appearance as a near universal phenomenon. Older scholarship supposed a single, monocausal, origin for Lent. It was assumed "that this forty-day period of pre-paschal preparation for baptismal candidates, penitents, and the Christian community in general … had its origin as a gradual backwards development of the short preparatory and purificatory fast held before the annual celebration of Pascha. According to this standard theory, the one- or two-day fast before Pascha (as witnessed to by Tertullian in *On Fasting* 13–14) became extended to

the final instructions, accompanied with fasts and (daily) exorcisms, the photizands were completely initiated by the final rituals resulting in baptism at the Easter Vigil. They were now full members of the community and could take part in the communal prayers and the Eucharist. Fifth, after having been initiated, the neophytes received some additional instructions during the following week, which could also contain an explanation of the mysteries (mystagogy). However, the latter is true for only Cyril of Jerusalem and Ambrose. John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia delivered their mystagogical instructions before baptism.[153]

After this general sketch of the process of initiation, we have to explore how this all applies to the specific rites of Theodore and Narsai, to which we will turn now.

1.4.1.1 Theodore of Mopsuestia

It cannot be established from his catechetical homilies whether Theodore was acquainted with any catechumenal preparation preceding the period of instruction that was introduced by the delivery of the first catechetical homily, culminated in baptism, and was concluded by the delivery of the two homilies on the Eucharist.[154] If not, the process of initiation formally began with

include: (1) the entire week, later called 'Great' or 'Holy Week,' beginning on the preceding Monday; (2) a three-week period (at least in Rome) including this 'Holy Week' and, finally, (3) a six-week, forty-day preparation period assimilating those preparing for Easter baptism to the forty-day temptation of Jesus in the desert" (Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 201–202). According to recent scholarship, however, the origin of Lent is much more complex. The universally standardised fourth-century praxis seems to have not a single but multiple origins. Johnson concludes that "the sudden emergence of the forty-day Lenten season after Nicaea represents a harmonizing and standardizing combination of different, primarily *initiatory* and *penitential*, practices in early, pre-Nicene Christianity. These practices may have consisted of: (1) a forty-day post-*Epiphany* fast in the Alexandrian tradition …; (2) the three-week preparation of catechumens for *Easter* baptism in the Roman and North African traditions; (3) the three-week preparation of catechumens for baptism elsewhere either on a different liturgical feast or on no specified occasion whatsoever; and (4) the possibility of other forty-day periods of fasting with a more penitential focus" (pp. 217–218). After the decline of the adult catechumenate and the system of penance, Lent became limited to the ascetic preparation of the Christian community in general. On the origins of Lent, see especially Talley, *Liturgical Year*, 163–225 and the following studies of Johnson: *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 201–218; *Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Lent"; "From Three Weeks to Forty Days".

153   Cf. Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 69–70. For a discussion of initiation in Antioch and a comparision of the approaches of John Chrysostom and Severus of Antioch, see Voicu, "Christian Initiation in Antioch".

154   Cf. Turner, *Hallelujah Highway*, 72. Several times in Theodore's homilies, ܐܠܗܘܬܐ is

the delivery of the first catechetical homily.[155] But when was it fulfilled? It is very common to consider the Eucharist as the culmination of initiation.[156] But does this hold for Theodore's rite if we maintain that initiation is "a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person to be initiated"? When has the candidate reached his 'decisive alteration in the religious and social status'? Let us examine how Theodore himself views the relationship between baptism and the Eucharist. At the end of his third homily on baptism, he says:

> After you have received in this way a sacramental birth through baptism, you draw nigh unto an immortal food, consonant with your birth, with which you will be nourished.[157]

And at the beginning of his first homily on the Eucharist, Theodore puts it this way:

> … and because we are now born in baptism through symbols and signs, it behoves us also to take our food according to the same symbols, so that we may be enabled to maintain the existence which we receive from baptism.[158]

Through baptism, the neophyte has been born sacramentally. Like an infant who needs food to stay alive and to grow, the newborn Christian needs nutrition consonant with his birth: sacramental food.[159] The Eucharist is necessary

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used of which Mingana rightly asserts that the author sometimes refers "by this word to the 'catechumenate' or the state of the 'Catechumens'" (Vol. 5, 104n2; see also 111n2). It is not clear, however, if this ܪ ܚܘ ܝ ܘ ܕ ܐ only refers to the period of final instruction as described in homily 1–14, or that it also covers a more extensive period of catechesis preceding this final phase.

155   As we have seen above (p. 18.), this phase did not start with formal enrolment, which only occurred somewhere during Holy Week, after the delivery of the three baptismal homilies.

156   See e.g. the contributions of Johnson and Winkler in *Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. 'Baptism'. Discussing the initiation rite as testified by Justin Martyr, Johnson calls the Eucharist "the culmination of baptism" (p. 36). Concerning the *Didascalia Apostolorum* and the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles*, Johnson remarks that "the Eucharist concludes the rite" (p. 36). With reference to the reshaping of the baptismal rites during the fourth century, Winkler mentions the christological discussions at that time "in the light of which also the changes in the baptismal rites, including the Eucharist, have to be seen." (p. 38).

157   3,69:28–30 (3,29); *s* 3,204:1–3.

158   xv,73:4–7 (xv,5); *s* xv,207:25–208:3.

159   According to Theodore, each specific type of birth and existence needs its own particu-

for the Christian to 'maintain the existence' he receives from baptism.[160] Furthermore, the Eucharist is exclusively fit for the baptised only as "those who have received the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit in the second birth of baptism, and have been found worthy to receive holiness therefrom."[161] Even then, however, partaking of the Eucharist is not something axiomatic. Only if the newborn believer lives a life in harmony with his new status of holiness and, doing so, strengthens the gift bestowed upon him by baptism is it appropriate for him to participate in the Eucharist.[162] In this way, the neophyte confirms and increases his holiness and perfects the expected benefits of the next world.[163]

For Theodore, then, the "decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person to be initiated" is fully attained by baptism, the second birth, through which the neophyte has acquired a status of holiness. As a logical consequence, the newborn Christian participates in every benefit belonging to his new standing, including the Eucharist. However, the Eucharist itself does not add anything to his initiation. Certainly, the first communion may have been experienced in a special way, but not as being the culmination of initiation, but as the first celebration of a life of holiness. Additional support for the above seems to be found by the observation that Theodore does not mention that, after being baptised, the neophytes are *directly* invited to the Eucharist.[164] That

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lar food. In natural life, we need our food to maintain our natural existence. In a similar way, in the next world, after the resurrection, we will receive the full gift of the Holy Spirit and remain in this immortal state. As we have then received the real birth of the resurrection and shall fully participate in life immortal, we do not have any need any more of the mysteries. In the intermediate state of the Christian however, who has been sacramentally born through baptism, he needs food corresponding to this state and birth, that is the sacramental food of the Eucharist (XV,71:10–23 (XV,1); *s* XV,205:20–206:10; see also XV,78:24–26 (XV,14), XV,92:27–31 (XV,40), XVI,103:10–15 (XVI,10)). Interestingly, this relation between baptism and Eucharist is also witnessed by Ephrem, who says: "Once this womb has given birth, the altar suckles and nurtures them: her children eat straight away, not milk, but perfect Bread!" (*Virg*. 7.8; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191).

160 Mazza, *Mystagogy*, 59 puts it this way: "A sacramental food exists, therefore, because there has been a sacramental birth. From this, we can infer that in Theodore's catechetical instruction, the 'necessity' of the Eucharist flows from the very nature of this sacrament's relation to baptism."

161 XVI,108:32–34 (XVI,22); *s* XVI,248:19–21. See also XVI,109:7–10 (XVI,23).

162 XVI,109:10–14 (XVI,23); *s* XVI,249:5–8.

163 XVI,109:22–29 (XVI,23); *s* XVI,249:15–21.

164 The only reference to the Eucharist in Theodore's baptismal homilies is found at the end of baptismal homily 3: "After you have received in this way sacramental birth through baptism, you draw nigh unto an immortal food, consonant with your birth, with which you will be nourished. You will have now to learn, at an opportune time, the nature of this food and the way in which it is presented to you ... we shall soothe you by silence, and by the

is to say, the celebration of the Eucharist is not presented, like all foregoing rituals, as the next (or 'final' in this case) phase of an ongoing process of initiation.

1.4.1.2   Narsai of Nisibis

We have no information concerning the catechumenate or final instructions of Narsai's community. As suggested in the Introduction, his liturgical homilies are probably preached after initiation, and do not contain any references to a preceding period of formation. This does not mean, of course, that such a thing did not exist, but just that we are ignorant about it. The first ritual Narsai discusses in his twin homilies is the *apotaxis/syntaxis* and the final ritual he describes is the Eucharist. What does Narsai's process of initiation look like if we define 'initiation' as "a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person to be initiated"?

It is evident that the 'decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person' begins with the renunciation of Satan and the adherence to Christ as the ritualisation of conversion. Consequently, the baptizand is anointed and baptised. Having discussed baptism and having described the renewal of the neophyte by the water as '[h]is birth', Narsai continues:

> In the way of spiritual life he begins to travel; and, like the spiritual beings, he lives by spiritual food. His mystical birth takes place in a manner spiritual; and according to his birth is the nourishment also that is prepared for him. New is his birth, and exceeding strange to them of earth; and there is no measure to the greatness of the food with which he is nourished. As milk he sucks the divine mysteries, and by degrees they lead him, as a child, to the things to come. A spiritual mother (sc. the Church) prepares spiritual milk for his life; and instead of the breasts she puts into his mouth the Body and Blood. With the Body and Blood the Church keeps alive the sons of her womb; and she reminds them of the great love of her betrothal.[165]

For Narsai, the Eucharist is not the culmination of initiation, but the first participation in the new food belonging to the new spiritual life of the novice.[166]

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permission of God we shall bring you at an opportune time near to the Divine food and our discourse thereon." (3,69:28–70:4 (14,29); *s* 3,204:1–11).

165   21,347:11–22; *s* :6–14.

166   See also 21,350:2–6 (*s* :1–4) where Narsai utters: "They suck the Spirit after the birth of Baptism; and according to the birth is also the nourishment that is high and exalted. Like

After the neophyte has been born 'mystically', he begins to travel; his spiritual journey commences.[167] In order to grow and stay alive, this 'spiritual infant' has to be nourished by food "that is prepared for him". As a mother feeds her newborn child, the Church feeds 'the son of her womb' with 'spiritual milk', the Eucharist.

We arrive at the same conclusion here as in the case of Theodore: the Eucharist is neither the final stage of initiation, nor its culmination. It does not conclude baptism, but begins the spiritual life of the newborn. The Eucharist adds nothing to the 'religious and social status' of the neophyte, but presupposes and confirms this new standing. Although Narsai does not treat the Eucharist in a separate homily like Theodore, it is noteworthy that he also does not mention an invitation to participate in the Eucharist directly following baptism as part of a consecutive rite of initiation. As such, there is not something like 'first communion' as a special concluding ritual. The Eucharist is dealt with as belonging to the new condition of the Christian as a whole.

1.4.2   *Baptismal Rite*

Now we have established the boundaries of 'baptism', 'mystery', and the whole process of initiation, we are equipped to evaluate the scope and usefulness of the term 'baptismal rite' (or 'baptismal liturgy').

Concerning Theodore's rite, it is not uncommon to apply the term 'baptismal rite' to those rituals that occurred at the Easter Vigil, starting with the *apotaxis/syntaxis*.[168] We may call this a pragmatic approach. From a mystagogical viewpoint, however, it does not seem justified to put the caesura right before the renunciation, since Theodore treats the whole process from the enrolment unto the post-baptismal signing as a unity.[169] This rite consists of two subunits

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young birds they lift up the wings of their conduct, and enter and rest in the fair nest of Holy Church."

167   See also 21,348:38–349:11 (*s* 348:23–349:6) where Narsai depicts the same picture of baptism followed by a travel with Christ assisted by the strength administered by the food of Body and Blood.

168   So e.g. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*; Riley, *Christian Initiation*; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 520–526.

169   Cf. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 21, who contends concerning the conflict between the candidate and Satan with reference to Theodore's rite: "The baptismal rites constitute a drama in which the candidate, who up to this time has belonged to the demon, strives to escape his power. This drama begins with the enrollment and is not concluded … until the actual Baptism." And as will be established below, the exorcism-part has much more of a preparation for the following rituals, than of a conclusion of a period of preparation and has strong ritual ties with the succeeding *apotaxis/syntaxis*.

and a centre or climax. The two subunits are 1) the rituals preceding the mystery and 2) the mystery, which begins with the signing on the forehead. The centre or climax is baptism.

Riley has rightly observed that the Eastern process of initiation in general and Theodore's in particular "is seen not as a linear series of points on a straight line, but rather as a circle or ellipse, as a totality, the centre of which can 'illogically' influence the other parts, even in an anticipatory way."[170] We already encountered this phenomenon discussing the meaning of the phrase 'oil of baptism'. This means that, although all spiritual benefits are dependent on baptism itself, these benefits may in an anticipatory way become conferred by preceding rituals, as the whole gets meaning by its ritual centre. Riley applies this principle to the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, but it also holds for preceding rituals like the enrolment, which Riley himself excludes from the 'baptismal rite'. By the enrolment the catechumen becomes an inhabitant of heaven, the great city. Concerning the way of life of the one enrolled, Theodore says:

> Indeed he ought to reject all earthly things, as is suitable to the one who is inscribed in heaven, and to do only the things that fit the life and conversation in heaven. He will also, if he is wise, pay perpetual taxes to the king and live a life which is consonant with baptism.[171]

The candidate is approached here as if already baptised.[172] From his enrolment on, the photizand becomes part of a coherent cyclic ritual process which receives its meaning *from* and is directed *to* its centre, the water rite. We encounter here what may be called the phenomenon of the 'ritualisation of baptism'.[173] Originally, 'baptism' and 'initiation' were mere synonyms. Over the centuries, however, (the spiritual meaning of) this basic rite became more and more ritualised by adding anointings, the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, the *traditio/redditio symboli* and other rituals.[174] Although the rite that materialised in this

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170   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 136.

171   1,25:31–35 (1,15); s 1,154 :3–7.

172   Longeat, "Rites du baptême," rightly remarks that "L'inscription n'est pas une simple formalité administrative, c'est le premier rite du baptême … L'inscription permettra de reconnaître le catéchumène comme appartenant déjà à l'Eglise de Dieu …" (p. 194).

173   Winkler, "Original Meaning", 72, 75, 79–80; Osborne, *Christian Sacraments*, 25, 71, 73; Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 157.

174   In a challenging paper, "Initiation by Anointing", Myers contends that "an early rite of initiation in eastern Syria was a rite in which water baptism was, at most, optional." (p. 150). She does not only confirm a practice wherein the oil takes precedence over the water—which is clearly the case in some sources (cf. Winkler, *Armenische Initiationsrituale*, 143)—but

way is not properly called 'baptism' (at least concerning Theodore's and Narsai's rite), it is evident that this ritualisation has the water rite as its very heart. It seems allowed, therefore, to call this whole—from the enrolment unto the post-baptismal signing—a 'baptismal rite' or 'baptismal liturgy'. Not as a synonym for 'baptism', but by way of expressing that this whole rite gets its meaning from and is centred around 'baptism'.

Having established this, we can be brief concerning Narsai's rite, where we encounter a similar relation between 'baptism' and its ritualisation, the 'baptismal rite'. Although the term 'baptism' is reserved for the water rite and the baptizand is only really initiated by the immersions, the preceding rituals already confer some benefits of baptism in an anticipatory way. This is especially true for the confession, the inscription, and the anointing. After the ritual of the Lawsuit, the candidate exclaims to the angels:

> 'Come, ye spiritual ones, rejoice with me, for I am saved alive from destruction; I am your fellow-servant and a fellow-labourer in your works; and with that Lord to whom ye minister I am desirous of serving.' He names himself a soldier of the Kingdom of the height—a fugitive who has returned to take refuge with the King of kings.[175]

The candidate clearly considers himself as having definitively crossed the border between dark and light, good and evil. But how can he have done so if not in an anticipatory way? This is the general pattern. Before the baptizand is inscribed in the archives, which as such is again a proleptic confirmation of his new status, the sponsor testifies for him in order that the priests "may name him heir, and son, and citizen".[176] Although not baptised yet, the photizand is already regarded a newborn Christian. We come across this apparition once more with reference to the anointing, when priest says concerning the novice: "Such a one … is the servant of the King of (all) kings that are on high and below; and with His name he is branded that he may serve (as a soldier) according to His will".[177]

Based upon our findings, it seems entirely justified, therefore, to employ the same terminology of 'baptismal rite' or 'baptismal liturgy' also to the whole of

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also defends an early practice of initiation by anointing without any water baptism at all. See further the discussion on the anointings on p. 282 ff. below.

175 22,361:28–33; *s* 361:18–362:1.

176 22,363:34–36; *s* :20–21.

177 22,367:22–25; *s* :13–14.

Narsai's rite as distinguished from 'baptism'. With the only, but important, difference that his rite does not start with the enrolment, but with the *apotaxis/ syntaxis*.

1.4.3   *Summary and Conclusion*

Our above examination of the relevant baptismal terminology concerning the rites of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Narsai of Nisibis yields the following results.[178]

Baptism | For both Theodore and Narsai, the mystery (ܐܪܙܐ) of baptism concerns the water rite consisting of three immersions, that is, 'baptism proper'. It comprises the liturgical centre of the process of initiation and constitutes the basic baptismal unit. This is most visible in Theodore, but in Narsai also baptism has the highest ritual and mystagogical density. In the present study we employ the deduced terms 'pre-baptismal' and 'post-baptismal' as referring to the rituals preceding and following baptism.

Mystery; mysteries | Apart from its application to baptism, both Theodore and Narsai use the term ܐܪܙܐ in a wider sense making up a second baptismal unit in order of magnitude. Theodore uses both the singular ܐܪܙܐ and the plural ܐܪܙܐ to refer to a larger cluster of rituals which starts with the signing on the forehead and concludes with the post-baptismal signing. Narsai only employs the plural to designate the cluster anointing-baptism; he reserves the singular for baptism.

Baptismal rite/liturgy | A third—and still more capacious—ritual unit is what we may call a 'baptismal rite' or 'baptismal liturgy'. This rite comprises the sum of ritual events as described in Theodore's baptismal homilies and Narsai's liturgical homilies except for the Eucharist. Theodore's baptismal rite begins with the enrolment and concludes with the post-baptismal signing. Narsai's rite starts with the renunciation and concludes with baptism. Although the term 'baptismal rite'/'baptismal liturgy' is not literally supported by the sources, the fact that the whole of the rite is centred around, focused upon, and receives its meaning from baptism as its inner centre, fully justifies such a terminology. Nevertheless, there are some potential sources of disarray we must be aware of: (1) It seems somewhat confusing to speak of a 'baptismal rite' itself consisting

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178   It goes without saying that the terminology of other sources will be respected in a similar way, no matter if it differs from that of Theodore of Narsai.

of 'pre-baptismal' and 'post-baptismal' rites. (2) Especially the term 'rite of baptism' may give rise to some disarray, since one could interpret it as referring to baptism (proper). Both causes of confusion may be avoided by the use of 'ritual', instead of 'rite', in 'pre-baptismal ritual(s)' and 'ritual of baptism' as referring to individual events which together constitute the whole of the 'baptismal rite' or 'baptismal liturgy'. When the context requires it or for the sake of stylistic variation, 'sub-rite' may be used as a synonym for 'ritual'[179] and 'initiation rite' ('rite of initiation')[180] may be used as a synonym for 'baptismal rite/liturgy'.

Initiation | The ritual matrix of the above mentioned units is 'initiation' that—following the definition of Eliade—is in fact a process which encompasses the whole of instructions and rituals resulting in a "decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person to be initiated". Although it may be that both the rites of Theodore (including the preceding baptismal catechesis) and Narsai were preceded by a liminal phase of a catechumenate, this cannot be established with any certainty upon their homilies as they are silent on this particular matter. If such a catechumenal phase existed, the baptismal rite would constitute the final stage of initiation. Theodore's pre-baptismal instructions are part of the process of initiation,[181] but not of the baptismal rite itself. Since the "decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person to be initiated" is fully realised by the baptismal rite culminating in baptism itself, the Eucharist as such does not contribute anything to initiation *an sich* but, instead, confirms and presupposes initiation. Therefore, the Eucharist is not part of the 'baptismal rite' or 'initiation'.

Before we bring this section to a close, it is most important to make the following concluding remarks concerning the basic structure of Theodore's and Narsai's rite. We may recall that both Theodore and Narsai consider baptism as the central ܐܪܙܐ, the crucial turning point of the rite which radically separates the 'before' and 'after'. This does not necessarily imply, however, that both authors basically approach their baptismal liturgy as a tripartite structure consisting of pre-baptismal rituals, baptism, and post-baptismal rituals. Indeed, the post-baptismal rituals are poorly represented since, besides the transitional

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179   When the ritual is qualified by an adjective or noun, we employ 'rite' instead of 'ritual', like 'water rite' and 'rite of the cilicium'.

180   To be distinguised from the (whole) 'process of initiation', see below.

181   See p. 16. Although (the final phase) of initation formally began with the enrolment, in retrospect the preceding deliverance of the mystagogical instructions may be considered part of the whole process of initiation.

rituals,[182] this unit only consists of a signing (Theodore) or is lacking (Narsai). As a consequence, this tripartite structure is completely out of balance or even absent. Therefore, I cannot consent with Day[183] that this threefold pattern is the 'deep structure' of every baptismal rite. Especially in the case of Narsai's rite, a tripartite structure imposes a division that is foreign to the rite itself and distorts its essential fabric. Instead, Theodore and Narsai primarily approach the rite in terms of pre-ܪܐܙܐ/ܪܐܙ̈ܐ and ܪܐܙܐ/ܪܐܙ̈ܐ. This is most evident with Theodore as he explicitly speaks of "the ceremonies that precede the mystery and … the mystery itself."[184] But also in Narsai's rite the ܪܐܙ̈ܐ are neatly distinguished from the preceding rituals. For these reasons, we will basically structure and approach the rites in terms of pre-ʾrāzā /ʾrāzē and ʾrāzā /ʾrāzē.[185] As we have seen, however, Theodore and Narsai do not apply these terms in exactly the same way. Theodore employs both the singular and the plural, but Narsai only the plural with reference to the liturgical mysteries.

Accoutred with this approach and terminology we may turn our effort now to the structure of the rite in detail, which will function as the framework for the actual comparison of the baptismal rites.

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182   See Chapter 2.

183   As is asserted by Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 5. In a former publication, "Critical Comparison," I also accepted the common threefold pattern. Although I am convinced now that, concerning the rites under consideration, this structure is not preferable, I still regard Day's division in primary structural units and secondary structural units as most helpful.

184   1,34:20–21 (1,28); *s* 1,163:12. Cf. 2,35:1–17 (2,1); *s* 2,164:11–165:1, where Theodore utters: "From what we have previously said, you have sufficiently understood the ceremonies which are duly performed, prior to the mystery … It is right now that you should receive the teaching of the ceremonies that take place in the mystery itself."

185   From now on I shall use *ʾrāzā /ʾrāzē* as a technical term and therefore render it in transliteration.

The Structure of the Rite

2.1 Theodore of Mopsuestia

Theodore's baptismal homilies present a rather orderly chronological picture of the baptismal rite, basically divided between the rituals preceding the mystery and the rituals of the mystery itself. The first step of the rite consists of the registration of the catechumen.[1] As the Church is a "symbol of the heavenly things",[2] this enrolment in the Church archives actually concerns a registration in the Kingdom of heaven, the heavenly city, which eventually will be inhabited by all believers.[3] In order to fulfil this introductory part of the rite, the candidate reports himself to the 'registrar of baptisms'.[4] This person questions the baptizand about his mode of life to inquire if it meets the requisites of the Kingdom of heaven. Next, the catechumen has to demonstrate that he is worthy of the citizenship of heaven. At this stage he is assisted by a 'sponsor', an experienced Christian, who testifies in his favour and makes himself available as his guide into the Kingdom of heaven.[5] Accordingly, the name of the sponsor is registered in the Church book, together with that of the candidate.[6]

In order to effectuate his enrolment and to enjoy the full happiness of it, the candidate must first become legally delivered from the lordship of Satan.[7] This is accomplished by means of a 'Lawsuit' or ceremony of exorcism.[8] This Lawsuit is performed by so-called 'exorcists' (ܡܥܙܘܕܢܐ)[9] who fight the baptizand's case against the Tyrant. During this whole scene, the candidate himself keeps completely quiet[10] and stands barefooted on sackcloth[11] without his outer gar-

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1   1,24:30–26:26 (1,14–16); *s* 1,152:20–155:6.
2   1,23:6 (1,11; *s* 1,150:23); 1,24:18–19 (1,13; *s* 1,152:11).
3   1,23:29–24:29 (1,12–13); *s* 1,151:15–152:19.
4   See further on this, Chapter 3, n6.
5   1,25:8–23 (1,14–15); *s* 1,153:7–20.
6   1,26:16–20 (1,16); *s* 1,154:21–155:1.
7   1,26:27–33:3 (1,17–25); *s* 1,155:7–161:22.
8   Both 'Lawsuit' (ܕܝܢܐ) and 'ceremony of exorcism' (ܡܥܙܘܕܘܬܐ) are used by Theodore to refer to the same ritual (2,35:6 (2,1); *s* 2,164:14), which he describes as a courtroom scene (see our discussion below).
9   1,31:5 (1,22); *s* 1,159:23.
10   1,31:25–26 (1,23); *s* 1,160:10–11.
11   Goatskin or *cilicium*, therefore also known as the 'Rite of the Cilicium', see Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium," 210.

ment, with his hands stretched out as if praying and looks downwards.[12] The aim of this posture is to show penitence and repentance, and so to move the judge (God) to mercy.

When this trial has come to an end, the candidate is brought to 'the priest' (the bishop) to make his "engagements and promises to God" through a recitation of "the words of the profession of faith and of prayer" (ܟܠܗ ܕܗܘܡܠܓܬܐ ܘܕܨܠܘܬܐ).[13] The "profession of faith" most likely concerns a recitation of a Creed (explained in the homilies I–X)[14] similar to the Antiochene Symbol of 379.[15] Since the "profession of faith" refers to the Creed which Theodore had expounded previously, it seems likely that the "prayer" pertains to the Lord's Prayer, which had been addressed in homily XI.[16]

Next, the catechumen stands again on sackcloth without his outer garment. He kneels down and offers a prayer to God with his arms outstretched to God and facing heaven.[17] This prayer forms one integrated scene with the following renunciation of Satan (*apotaxis*), adherence to God (*syntaxis*), and the signing on the forehead. The close connection of these parts of the rite is above all corroborated by the corporeal movements of the apprentice:[18] at the beginning of

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12   1,31:35–32:19 (1,24–25); *s* 1,160:18–161:8.

13   2,35:8–10 (2,1); *s* 2,164:16–17. Cf. my "Critical Comparison," 520–521n23. The verb ܐܡܪ indicates the recitative character of the ritual (*s* 2,164:16; cf. *s* 1,163:1).

14   1,33:4–34:16 (1,26–27; *s* 1,161:23–163:8); 2,35:13–27 (2,1; *s* 2,164:11–22). According to Mingana's translation, this ritual concerns "the faith and the Creed". However, this rendering is questionable, see Witkamp, "Critical Comparison," 520–521n23.

15   Gerber, *Nicänum*, esp. 108–158.

16   Cf. *T&D* and *BS*, who translate with "oraison (dominicale)" and "(Herren-)Gebetes" respectively. Interestingly, the recitation of the prayer is mentioned only in the summary of the rituals discussed in homily 1 at the beginning of homily 2, but not in the actual discussion of the rituals in homily 1 itself (1,33:12–34:16 (1,26–27); *s* 1,162:4–163:8). Why this inconsistency? It is not very likely that "the prayer" in homily 2 is a later addition of someone trying to adapt the text to the practice of the day, since this leaves completely unexplained why the same adaptation has not been made to homily 1, not even to the *synopsis* (cf. p. 14). But if the prayer in the summary is authentic, then Theodore must have discussed it in homily 1. By consequence, its omission in the text must be the responsibility of the 'educated listener' (see p. 16) who took notes and wrote down the homilies. Yet, this only seems to make sense if Theodore himself put so much emphasis on the recitation of "the words of the profession of faith" that it completely overshadowed the prayer. The whole situation seems to betray that Theodore felt uncomfortable with the position of the Lord's Prayer in the rite, possibly because the addressing of God as 'Father' implies one's παρρησία towards God, an idea Theodore strongly connects to the later anointing of the forehead (see p. 235 ff.).

17   2,36:17–37:14 (2,3–4); *s* 2,165:14–166:16.

18   Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 70–74.

the prayer he kneels down and he remains in this posture until after the signing when he is raised on his feet.[19]

The mystery begins when the bishop, dressed in "a robe of clean and radiant linen"[20]—a reference to the joy of the world to come—signs the candidate on the forehead with oil and utters the triune formula. This signing comprises the "firstfruits of the mystery".[21] After the signing, the sponsor spreads an *orarium* on the crown of the baptizand's head and raises him on his feet.[22]

The remaining liturgical mysteries are the anointing of the body, baptism, and the post-baptismal signing. In order to fulfil the anointing of the body, the baptizand takes off (all) his garments and after the triune formula has been uttered, probably by a presbyter,[23] the baptizand is anointed accordingly, possibly by deacons.[24]

Theodore does not explicitly mention, or even allude to, a consecration of the oil. We would have an indication of the presence of this ritual if Theodore, one way or the other, associated the impact of the oil with the activity of the Holy Spirit. Yet, concerning neither the signing, nor the anointing of the body does he connect the effect of the oil to the activity of the Holy Spirit. Mingana's 'holy chrism'[25]—used concerning both the signing on the forehead and the full body anointing—may seem to justify some relation between the Holy Spirit and the oil, but the Syriac term underlying his 'holy chrism' is ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ, which is actually better rendered with 'oil of anointing'.[26] Therefore, Theodore's rite does not seem to contain any allusion to a consecration of the oil. We may wonder, then, whether Theodore's rite simply did not include a blessing of the oil, or that Theodore left it unmentioned deliberately in order to avoid an undesirable connection between the Spirit and the oil (which would not have agreed with his mystagogy of the anointings). Because of this uncertainty, we have to put a question mark concerning the presence of this ritual in Theodore's rite.

Before baptism, the bishop consecrates the water, as it is not the water itself, but the power of the Holy Spirit that confers all the spiritual benefits.[27] Although Theodore does not explicitly say when this consecration was

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19   Compare 2,36:17 (2,3; s 2,165:14–15) with 2,47:14–16 (2,19; s 2,178:11–13).
20   2,45:34 (2,17; s 2,176:15–16).
21   2,45:29 (2,16; s 2,176:10); 2,46:9 (2,17; s 176:24–177:1).
22   2,47:14–16 (2,19; s 2,178:11–13).
23   See our discussion on p. 56.
24   3,54:3–32 (3,8); s 3,185:25–186:23.
25   3,54:14 (3,8); s 186:8.
26   See p. 221.
27   3,56:20–30 (3,10); s 3,188:24–189:8.

performed—he just mentions that the candidates were admitted in the pool "[w]hen the water has been perfected"[28]—we have argued above[29] that, very likely, the baptismal water was blessed during the anointing of the body, shortly before baptism, but that it was not witnessed by the candidates.

After having blessed the water, the bishop, while wearing the same special linen as during the preceding signing, baptises the candidate by immersing him thrice, that is, in the triune name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.[30]

Prior to the concluding signing on the forehead, the neophyte receives a white garment.[31] Rituals like the vesting of the newly baptised are categorised by Day as 'transitional rituals'.[32] A typical feature of such rituals is that they "do not add to what has been achieved but … demonstrate that the candidates have been initiated and now take their place within the worshipping community."[33] Day warns that we must carefully distinguish these transitional rituals from rituals which are clearly initiatory. Indeed, the vesting of the neophyte with the white garment does not add anything to his initiation, but 'just' indicates his new status. Furthermore, although from a strictly chronological point of view the ceremony of the white garment may be considered as 'post-baptismal', this ritual is so strongly connected with baptism that it seems unnatural to disconnect it from the water bath. In the charts below, we will indicate the transitional rituals as a separate subcategory hovering between baptism and post-baptismal rituals.

Finally, the candidate is signed on the forehead.[34] The authenticity of this post-baptismal signing is a matter of debate, however. The main objection is straightforward: Early Syrian baptismal rites, including that of Chrysostom, do not have a post-baptismal anointing, and Theodore's would therefore be an exception. As a solution to this 'problem', some scholars consider Theodore's post-baptismal signing as a later addition, which aims to harmonise the rite with the custom of the day. Some more specific arguments for this view are

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28   3,56:31 (3,10); *s* 3,189:8 (for the translation, see p298n19).

29   See p. 57.

30   3,58:24–63:11 (3,14–19); *s* 3,191:14–196:17.

31   3,68:1–13 (3,26–27); *s* 3,201:26–202:11.

32   Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 120. Other typical rituals are: "imposition of hands, blessings … procession into church, prayers by or for the neophytes, kiss, liturgical greeting, lighted torches, a specific episcopal ritual." (p. 120).

33   Ibid., 120.

34   "After you have received the grace of baptism and worn a white garment that shines, the priest draws nigh unto you and signs you on the forehead and says: 'So-and-so is signed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.'" (3,68:12–15 (3,27); *s* 3,202:10–12).

the following.[35] (a) According to Mitchell, the post-baptismal signing "is a doublet of the pre-baptismal signing, using the same formula".[36] Furthermore, (b) Mitchell notes that the description of the post-baptismal signing is remarkably brief as compared to the pre-baptismal signing, which comprises four pages of Mingana's edition.[37] (c) Lash contends that paragraph 28 perfectly ties in with paragraph 26, but that both are separated by the description of the signing in paragraph 27.[38] Finally, (d) Lash points out that a post-baptismal anointing is completely ignored in the corresponding passage in Narsai.[39]

However, these arguments[40] do not seem compelling. First of all, it must be noted that Theodore is not the sole witness to a post-baptismal ritual in the fourth-century Syrian tradition. The three main descriptions of baptism in the *Apostolic Constitutions* all include a post-baptismal anointing with chrism.[41] And although it is not stated explicitly that the forehead is anointed, it is likely since one description suggests that the anointing took place after dressing.[42]

Secondly, the nature of Theodore's signing seems different from the later post-baptismal anointings. To start with, the ritual is not for conferring the

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35   Although the authenticity of the post-baptismal signing in Theodore's rite is questioned by several scholars, I present only the objections offered by Lash, "L'onction post-baptismale" and Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, 41, since these cover most, if not all, relevant arguments concerning this issue. Therefore, I leave aside, for example, the objections of Varghese, *Onctions*, 99–100 who does not add any new information but only repeats Lash and Mitchell.

36   Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, 41.

37   Ibid., 41.

38   Lash, "L'onction post-baptismale," 43.

39   Ibid., 43. Cf. Mitchell, *Four Fathers on Baptism*, 53, who contends that the similarity between the rites of Theodore and Narsai "is so great both in the structure of the rites described and in the details of their interpretation that the lack of a post-baptismal consignation in Narsai itself suggests that there was none in Theodore's original text." Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 98. A variant approach is found in De Vries, "Nestorianismus", 135, who does not deny the authenticity of the post-baptismal signing as such, but argues against its being an anointing by reasoning that Narsai's did not contain a post-baptismal anointing. Besides the general weakness of this overenthusiastic comparative approach (see below), this argumentation is flawed since Narsai's rite does not comprise any post-baptismal initiatory rite at all.

40   Both Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, 41 (and 41n1) and Lash, "L'onction post-baptismale," 43 also refer to a personal letter from the Syriac scholar Khouri-Sarkis in which he claims that the signing is not original. Since, however, these letters are not public and neither Mitchell nor Lash shares any substantial additional argument from them, I will leave this point aside in the discussion below.

41   See *AC* III,16, VII,22 and VII,44 (ed. Metzger, II, 158; III, 46, 48 lines 10–11; III, 100; tr. Grisbrooke, 64; 66; 68).

42   *AC* III,16.

Spirit, which has already occurred during the preceding baptism.[43] On this point, Theodore's rite is still in line with Chrysostom and not with later Syrian practice according to which the bestowal of the Spirit is ritually connected to the post-baptismal anointing.[44] Furthermore, it is questionable whether Theodore's signing is performed with oil.[45] Contrary to the pre-baptismal anointings, Theodore does not mention oil but only says (twice) that the bishop "signs" (ܪܫܡ) the candidate on the forehead.[46] Since it is not Theodore's habit to abbreviate (to the contrary!), it must be seriously considered here whether the omission of oil simply indicates that the signing is performed without any sort of unction.

Thirdly, since it is broadly accepted that in the Syrian tradition a post-baptismal anointing first developed in the fourth century[47] and became generally accepted from the fifth century onwards[48], there must of necessity have

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43 As is rightly observed by Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 403; Varghese, *Onctions*, 99–100; Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 199n65; Lampe, "Seal of the Spirit," 202 and De Vries, "Nestorianismus," 133 but not by Brock, "Early History," 38; Jugie, "Liber ad baptizandos," 263; Longeat, "Rites du baptême," 201; Meyers, "Structure," 42; Mitchell, *Four Fathers on Baptism*, 52, and Neunheuser, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 210, who all assert that the post-baptismal signing or anointing is connected with the conferring of the Spirit. For a discussion of the relation between baptism and the Spirit in Theodore, see pp. 310 ff.

44 See e.g. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* II,3.8; IV,3,11.

45 Cf. Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 202n4; Varghese, *Onctions*, 98.

46 3,68:12 (3,27); *s* 3,202:11–12 and 3,68:26 (3,27); *s* 3,202:21.

47 In the Latin West, a post-baptismal anointing is already witnessed by Tertullian (see below, p. 253).

48 See Brock, "Transition", 215. The origin of a post-baptismal anointing in the (West) Syrian tradition is a complex issue. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 105–107 summarises the three most popular views as follows: (a) Ratcliff suggested that a post-baptismal anointing was first appended in Jerusalem. Encouraged by the topography of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, a Romans 6 typology was introduced, but the traditional Jordan typology of the pre-baptismal anointing was retained by transferring it to a post-baptismal ritual. See more specifically Ratcliff, "Old Syrian Baptismal Tradition"; (b) According to Winkler and Brock, the introduction of a post-baptismal anointing was the result of a change in theological model. When the original Jordan typology was being replaced by a Romans 6 typology, the pre-baptismal rituals became increasingly cathartic. In this way, purification became the condition for the reception of the Spirit, which shifted to the water rite and ultimately to a post-baptismal anointing. See more specifically Winkler, "Original Meaning" and her major study *Armenische Initiationsrituale*; Brock, "Transition", 215–225 and his "Syrian Baptismal Ordines". (c) Botte, followed by Varghese, proposed that a post-baptismal anointing was a ritual introduced to accept former heretics into orthodoxy. If someone had experienced Trinitarian baptism outside orthodoxy, he was not re-baptised, but only anointed to confer the Spirit. See more specifically Botte, "Postbaptismal Anointing," 63–71; Varghese, *Onctions*, 113–133. The Winkler-Brock thesis seems the most influential view, see e.g. Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 143–144, 153–157. Spinks, *Early*

been a period of transition during which different rites reflected different stages of development. This is exactly what we observe, especially when we combine our preceding observations with the Winkler-Brock thesis.[49] In Chrysostom's rite, the conferring of the Spirit has been shifted from the pre-baptismal anointing to baptism. Theodore's rite would then reflect a further stage with a post-baptismal signing, but still without oil. A next step would then be found in the *Apostolic Constitutions* where oil is used, though the conferring of the Spirit is still ritually connected with preceding rituals. Within such a broader context of evolution, it does not make sense to sideline Theodore's post-baptismal signing 'because it is not in line with other Syrian testimonies and reflects later practice'. Moreover, I agree with Yarnold that if Theodore's description of the post-baptismal signing is a later addition to bring it into line with subsequent liturgical practice "it is a surprisingly fumbling one … If some editor wished to insert a reference to a post-baptismal ritual for the giving of the Spirit, why did he describe a ritual whose purpose is to show that the Spirit *has already been given*?"[50]

Fourthly, if the post-baptismal signing would be a doublet of the pre-baptismal signing, this does not prove at all that it postdates Theodore. It is equally possible that the doublet predates Theodore and that it was already part of the rite he commented on. The concise nature of the ritual nicely fits that of a rite in development.

Fifthly, Lash's suggestion that the description of the post-baptismal signing in paragraph 27[51] may be an addition because paragraph 28 perfectly ties in with paragraph 26 is far from convincing. The same could be argued for paragraph 28, since paragraph 29 also seems to link up perfectly with paragraph 26 or even with 27. In a similar way we could maintain that the whole passage following "After this you go out of the water" in paragraph 19 until paragraph 26 must be an addition since the first sentence of paragraph 26, "When you go out (of the water) you wear a garment that is wholly radiant" perfectly links up with

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and Medieval Rituals, 46–47 is a critic of the above mentioned views. He rejects any idea of development and suggests, instead, that different rites reflect local variations. However, even if Spinks is right, it is still true that one pattern ultimately became "*the* dominant pattern with other 'local variations' disappearing except for occasional traces or remnants in the rites. In other words, perhaps this pattern was present in some circles as an alternative from early on, as attested in some literature. But, if so, one must still account for why and how it becomes, with some notable exceptions, *the* pattern for most of the Christian-East in the late-fourth century" (Johnson, *Christian Initiation*, 156).

49 See preceding footnote.
50 Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 199n65.
51 Following the numbering system of *T&D*.

the first half of paragraph 19. As such, this phenomenon concerns Theodore's writing style much more than it sustains any issues of authenticity. It would be different if it could be proven that the style of paragraph 27 is at odds with the remainder of Theodore's homilies. But that remains to be seen.[52]

Finally, to consider the missing post-baptismal signing or anointing in Narsai's rite as an argument for the non-authenticity of Theodore's post-baptismal signing involves a great deal of circular reasoning. Indeed, it presupposes Narsai's rite being heavily influenced by Theodore's. Narsai's absent ritual is subsequently used as a plea for Theodore's not being original. But of course, that is begging the question. Furthermore, we should remind ourselves that a "post-baptismal anointing did not establish itself among the Nestorians ... until the patriarchate of the westerniser Ishoyābh III in the mid-7th century."[53] It may come as no surprise then that Narsai's rite does not contain a post-baptismal anointing. This phenomenon is satisfactorily explained by the general development of the East Syrian rite and it seems unnecessary, even forced, to postulate an influence of Theodore's rite here.

To sum up, there are no compelling arguments against the authenticity of Theodore's post-baptismal signing. What is more, Day has observed that where a post-baptismal anointing is present, the transitional rituals receive less emphasis, probably because they have been relocated by the insertion of a post-baptismal anointing.[54] While Theodore's rite only has the vesting of the candidate with the white garment as a transitional ritual, Chrysostom's rite, for example, (which does not contain a post-baptismal anointing) includes a kiss and greeting and an intercessory prayer.[55] This poor representation of transitional rituals in Theodore's rite, then, is in harmony with the presence of a post-baptismal signing. If this argumentation is valid, we have some extra support here for its authenticity.[56]

If we put Theodore's overall liturgy in chronological order, we get the schema as presented in table 1. In this table I offer both the classical division of pre-baptismal rituals/ baptism/post-baptismal rituals and my own proposal of a twofold structure of the rituals preceding the mystery/ies (pre-ʾrāzā /ʾrāzē) and the rituals of the mystery/ies (ʾrāzā /ʾrāzē). Both patterns of primary structural

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52   I am not aware of any such study.

53   Green, "Pre-Baptismal Seal," 84. For the influence of Ishoyābh III (580–658) on the East-Syrian baptismal rite, see Diettrich, *Nestorianische Taufliturgie*.

54   Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 120, 127.

55   Ibid., 126.

56   Of course, we could still argue that the later editor also adapted these transitional rituals. Although we cannot completely rule out this possibility, the need to fall back on such an auxiliary hypothesis to 'save the theory' does not enhance its credibility.

TABLE 1   The structure of the baptismal rite of Theodore of Mopsuestia

Primary structural units	Secondary structural units		Primary structural units (classical division)
Rituals preceding the mystery/ies (pre-ʾrāzā / ʾrāzē)	– Enrolment and sponsor – Lawsuit (exorcism) – Creed and Lord's Prayer – Penitential prayer – *Apotaxis/syntaxis*		Pre-Baptismal Rituals
Rituals of the mystery/ies (ʾrāzā / ʾrāzē)	– Consecration of the oil? – Signing on the forehead – Anointing of the body – Rising and *orarium* – Consecration of the water (during anointing of the body)		
	– BAPTISM	– None	Baptism
	– Transitional ritual: – White garment		Post-Baptismal Rituals
	– Signing		

units are further subdivided into secondary structural units. Although both divisions allow a side-by-side comparison, there is one point where both patterns conflict as a result of a differing structure and terminology: the water rite. In the classical division 'baptism' functions as a primary structural unit, while in the other as a secondary structural unit. In order to avoid the odd situation that, from the perspective of the threefold division, baptism would be classified as both a primary and a secondary structural unit, I have divided the box of 'baptism' in the second column into two parts. The right part ('None') indicates the absence of any secondary structural units here, since, in a threefold division, 'baptism' is classified as a primary structural unit.

2.2   Narsai of Nisibis

Narsai's rite certainly contains the following rituals in sequential order, starting with the events as described in homily 22: renunciation of the Devil (*apotaxis*), confession of the faith (*syntaxis*, succeeded by the description of the role of the sponsor), registration of the name of the candidate in the books, conse-cration of the oil, signing on the forehead. The consecration of the water and baptism—followed by embraces, kisses, and the vesting of the candidate as transitional rituals—are discussed in homily 21. There are no post-baptismal initiatory rituals.

There is, however, one ritual which is not mentioned in the above enumera-tion. This concerns a ritual which Narsai designates as 'Lawsuit' (ܕܝܢܐ).[57] The position of this ritual is not easily established and needs some further clar-ification. In an earlier publication, I thoroughly investigated this issue and concluded that the Lawsuit is positioned between the renunciation and the confession.[58] In the following, I will present the most important arguments for this view.

It is plain that the pre-ʾrāzē unit basically consists of a renunciation followed by a confession, as Narsai himself summarises (italics mine):

> They *first* renounce the dominion of the Evil One who brought them to slavery; *and then* they confess the power of the Creator who has set them free. Two things he says who draws nigh to the mysteries of the Church: a renunciation of the Evil One, and a (confession of) faith in the Maker: 'I renounce the Evil One and his angels,' he cries with the voice, 'and I have no dealings with him, not even in word.'[59]

There is no doubt that the construction "They first … and then …" (ܩܘܡܬܐ … ܘܗܝܟ) indicates a chronology of rituals,[60] which is further confirmed by Nar-

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57   "As in a lawsuit (ܕܝܢܐ) the priest stands at the hour of the Mysteries, and accuses the devil on behalf of sinners." (22,363:6–7; *s* :3–4). Instead of 'Lawsuit', it is more common to speak of 'exorcism'. Yet, as this ritual in Narsai's rite is not really an exorcism (as will be shown below), I prefer to speak of 'Lawsuit'. Nevertheless, it is not possible to completely avoid the term 'exorcism' when comparing Narsai's rite with other's. In those cases, the term will normally be put between quotation marks to indicate that Narsai's ritual is not really exorcistic.

58   Witkamp, "Critical Comparison".

59   22,359:17–23; *s* :10–14.

60   *s* 22,359:11. ܩܘܡܬܐ may have the meaning of 'first', 'first of all', 'before', 'previously', 'at the

sai's subsequent more elaborate discussion of the rituals. After having dealt with the renunciation of the Devil,[61] he concludes: "These things the disciple of the truth renounces when he becomes a disciple."[62] Narsai continues: (italics mine):

> *And then*[63] he comes to the confession of the faith. The truth of his soul he reveals by the sensible voice: 'Lo,' he says, 'I have turned away from the Evil One to the Creator.' He puts the devils to shame by the utterance of his mouth, (saying): 'Hearken, ye rebellious ones, I have no part with you.' The assemblies of the height he makes to rejoice by the words of his faith: 'Come, ye spiritual ones, rejoice with me, for I am saved alive from destruction; I am your fellow-servant and a fellow-labourer in your works; and with that Lord to whom ye minister I am desirous of serving.' He names himself a soldier of the Kingdom of the height—a fugitive who has returned to take refuge with the King of kings.[64]

Directly after this section, the account of the Lawsuit is introduced by the words "He first …".[65] The question is how this latter phrase impinges on the relationship between the Lawsuit and the preceding description of the confession of the faith. Or, stated differently, in what way is the Lawsuit related to the confession? There are three possibilities: (1) the Lawsuit in a sense constitutes a part on its own and follows the confession, (2) the Lawsuit constitutes an integral part of the confession, or (3) the Lawsuit constitutes a part on its own and precedes the confession.

Option 1 seems to have the least credit. Indeed, if the Lawsuit succeeds the confession, why did Narsai not, instead of "He first", use the more obvious construction, "And then …" (ܘܗܝ), which he uses regularly?[66]

If option 2 is true, and so the Lawsuit constitutes the first part of the confession, Narsai first makes a summary statement on the confession and sub-

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beginning', see Payne Smith, 238b; Sokoloff, 681a. ܟܢ (or ܗܝ) may have the meaning of '(and) then', 'next', 'afterward', see Sokoloff, 43a; Payne Smith, 217b.

61 22,359:15–361:21; *s* 359:9–361:14.

62 22,361:20–21; *s* :13–14.

63 Syriac: ܘܗܝ (*s* 22,361:14). See n60 above.

64 22,361:22–33; *s* 361:14–362:1.

65 That is, following the English word order of Connolly's translation (22,362:1). A slavish rendering of the Syriac word order would yield: "The stewards of the Holy Church he entreats first …" (ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܦܝܣ ܘܥܕܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܐܦܝ̈ ܗܘ ܒܬܪ ܠܐܦ; *s* 22,362:1). ܩܕܡܝܬܐ may have the meaning of 'first', 'before', see Sokoloff, 1319a.

66 Certainly nine times, distributed over both homilies. See e.g. *s* 22,359:11, 16, 18.

sequently elaborates it starting with, "He first …". In this case, we would not expect Narsai to discuss the confession after the Lawsuit separately, since he is already describing the confession while discussing the Lawsuit.

Option 3, to the contrary, requires the confession to be treated separately as a ritual succeeding the Lawsuit. This is indeed what we observe. Directly following the description of the Lawsuit, Narsai maintains: "He [the candidate, NW] waits for the priest to bring in his words before the Judge; and he (the priest) restores to him the chart of liberty with the oil and the water."[67] This is succeeded by a description of the testimony of the sponsor, the registration in the books, and the signing.[68]

Crucial here is the meaning of the ritual as expressed by the phrase, "He waits for the priest to bring in his words before the Judge". This phrase is elucidated by some similar expressions in the same homily (italics mine):

> They renounce the standard of the Evil One, and his power and his angels; and then he (the priest) traces the standard of the King on their forehead. They confess and they renounce the two in one, without doubting (making) a renunciation of the Evil One, and a confession of the heart in the name of the Divinity. By the hand of the priesthood they make a covenant with the Divinity, that they will not again return to Satan by their doings. *They give to the priest a promise by the words of their minds; and he brings in, reads (it) before the good-pleasure of God.* The chart which is the door of the royal house he holds in his hands; and from the palace he has (received) authority to inscribe (the names of) men.[69]

And:

> Lo, the sheep are gathered together, and the lambs and the ewes; and he sets upon them the stamp of life of the word of his Lord. Lo, he brings them, as it were, into a furnace by means of their words; *and he exacts from them the one confession of the name of the Creator.* As a pen the (divine) Nod holds him spiritually, and inscribes (and) writes body and soul in the book of life.[70]

In still another passage, Narsai remarks:

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67   22,363:25–27; S :14–15.
68   22,363:28–364:5; S 363:16–364:3.
69   22,367:5–16; S :3–10.
70   22,359:7–12; S :4–8.

> *The priest stands as a mediator, and asks him: 'Of whom dost thou wish to become a servant from henceforth?' He learns from him whom he wishes to call Master*; and then he inscribes him in the number of the firstborns of the height.[71]

It is important for our argument that these passages reflect the same chronological order of rituals. That is, the phrases rendered in italics seem to be succeeded directly by the registration in the books. Given this state of affairs, it is reasonable to suppose that these phrases are synonymous descriptions of the same ritual. This view is further corroborated by the observation that the phrase "and he brings in, reads (it) before the good-pleasure of God" in the first quotation above is very similar to the phrase under consideration: "He waits for the priest to bring in his words before the Judge". The only, but important, difference is that the former is preceded by some additional information concerning the nature of this ritual: "They give to the priest a promise by the words of their minds". The second and third quotation sequentially supply the information that the priest "exacts from them the one confession of the name of the Creator" and asks the baptizand, "'Of whom dost thou wish to become a servant from henceforth?'" If we combine this information, the picture emerges that the neophyte makes an explicit confession in answer to a question or encouragement of the priest and this confession is positioned between the Lawsuit and the enrolment. This all makes option 3 the most plausible: the Lawsuit constitutes a part on its own and precedes the confession.

Another matter which needs clarification is the anointing part. In the above enumeration of rituals, I mentioned only the signing on the forehead. Yet, it is widely assumed that Narsai's rite contains two anointings, a signing on the forehead followed by an anointing of the whole body.[72] This assumption is sustained or maybe even provoked by the italicised phrase in the following passage from Connolly's translation (italics mine):

> He calls the King's servants by their names and causes them to stand (forth); and he makes them to pass one by one, and marks their faces with the brand of the oil. […] The priest does not say 'I sign,' but 'is signed'; for

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71   22,359:24–28; *s* :14–17.

72   Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*, 71; Thumpeparampil, *Liturgical Homilies*, 127; Kappes, "Voice of Many Waters," 539; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 704; Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 154. Sebastian Brock, however, claims that Narsai's rite knows only the anointing of the forehead. See Brock, e-mail message to the author (1) and his "Commentaries," 59 and "Syrian Baptismal Ordines," 179.

the stamp that he sets is not his, but his Lord's. He is (but) the media-
tor who has been chosen by a favour to minister; and because it is not
his it drives out iniquity and gives the Spirit. By the visible oil he shews
the power that is in the names, which is able to confirm the feebleness of
men with hidden (powers). *The three names he recites, together with* (*the
rubbing of*) *the oil upon the whole man*; that hostile demons and vexing
passions may not harm him.[73]

However, "the rubbing of" is not in the Syriac, which runs thus: ܫܡ̈ܗܐ ܬܠܬܐ
ܗܘ ܩܪܐ ܒܡܫܚܐ ܐܢܫܐ ܟܠܗ and may be literally translated as, "The three
names he recites with the oil upon the whole man".[74] Concerning the phrase
"the oil upon the whole man", Brock contends that

> … the term for 'man' is *nāsʿā*, 'human person', and not 'body' (as would be
> required if the oil was really being rubbed over the body). The passage in
> fact is just referring to the single pre-baptismal *rushmā*, where the effect
> of the oil is 'on the whole human person'.[75]

Brock is probably right for the following reasons. Firstly, the immediate con-
text of the phrase, "The three names he recites with the oil upon the whole
man" clearly has only the anointing of the forehead in view. After the discus-
sion quoted above, Narsai continues his account which he concludes with the
following remark:

> The sign of His name the devils see upon a man; and they recoil from him
> in whose name they see the Name of honour. The name of the Divinity
> looks out from the sign on the forehead; and the eyes of the crafty ones
> are ashamed to look upon it.[76]

This concluding passage not only confirms that Narsai is probably discussing
only the anointing of the forehead, it also further clarifies the meaning of the
phrase "the oil upon the whole man" above which is followed by "that hostile

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73   22,367:17–38; *s* :10–22.
74   *s* 22,367:21.
75   Brock, e-mail message to the author (1). Although Connolly's translation seems (partly)
      responsible for this misinterpretation, it is interesting to note that this reading was prob-
      ably not intended by Connolly himself since he maintains that "[i]t is plain that the one
      and only anointing (*rushmâ*) of which Narsai speaks came before the immersion" (43n1).
76   22,368:9–13; *s* :7–9.

demons and vexing passions may not harm him." In the quotation above, "the sign ... upon a man" is clearly in parallel with "the sign on the forehead". The effect of this 'sign' is a deterrence of the 'devils'. In the phrase under discussion, we encounter the same connection expressed in similar words. This time it is not "the sign on the forehead" or "the sign ... upon a man", but "the oil upon the whole man" that effectuates protection against 'hostile demons' and 'vexing passions'.[77] This same effect expressed in similar words strongly suggests that we have three similar references here to the same ritual, the signing on the forehead.

Secondly, nowhere outside of the immediate context of the phrase under consideration, neither in homily 22, nor in homily 21 do we find a reference or even an allusion to a full body anointing. It is true that Narsai mentions several times that the priest "signs the body" (ܪܫܡ ܦܓܪܐ) of the candidate.[78] However, it is obvious that this 'signing' concerns the ܪܘܫܡܐ, the signing on the forehead. In the larger context, the verb ܪܫܡ, 'to sign', clearly and exclusively refers to the ܪܘܫܡܐ.[79] Furthermore, it is never stated that 'the *whole* body' is signed, but just 'the body'. As by Jewish circumcision the 'body' is circumcised by cutting off the foreskin, the 'body' is signed by anointing the forehead.[80] Interestingly, discussing the oil and the water, Narsai remarks: "With the external sign (*rushmâ*) he touches the hidden diseases that are within; and then he lays on the drug of the Spirit with the symbol (*âthâ*) of the water."[81] Although the "and then" (ܘܟܢ)[82] only indicates a sequence and does not necessarily exclude another ritual being positioned between the signing and baptism, the complete lack of any evidence to the contrary seems to justify the interpretation here that baptism directly follows the anointing of the forehead. Anyhow, within the whole context of both homilies, if the phrase under discussion should refer to a complete body anointing, it stands completely isolated. But how strong is this reference actually?

Thirdly, Brock's observation that Narsai does not speak of oil upon 'the body' (ܦܓܪܐ), but upon 'the man' (ܐܢܫܐ) carries much weight. In the same context

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77 See also 22,366:19 ff. (*s* :22 ff.) where Narsai mentions the same effect of the signing.

78 22,363:40 (*s* :23); 22,365:12 (*s* :7); 22,365:40–41 (*s* :24); 22,366:1 (*s* :1).

79 See especially 22,365:38 ff. and particularly 22,366:22 (*s* :14) and 22,367:17–29 (*s* :10–17).

80 The way Narsai describes the signing shows that he considers this pre-baptismal ritual as the pendant of Jewish circumcision: "The iron of the oil the priest holds on the tip of his fingers; and he signs the body and the senses of the soul with its sharp (edge). The son of mortals whets the oil with the words of his mouth; and he makes it sharp as iron to cut of iniquity" (22,365:11–14; *s* :6–8).

81 22,366:10–13; *s* :6–8. The Syriac transliterations between brackets are Connolly's.

82 *s* 22,366:7.

Narsai explains that it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that the oil imparts power to "body and soul" (ܒܓܘܫܡܐ ܘܒܢܦܫܐ).[83] At first glance the mention of 'body' seems to support an anointing of the body. However, the addition of 'soul' makes this interpretation improbable. It is clear that 'the soul' is not anointed physically. The word pair 'body and soul', therefore, does not refer to what is anointed, but to the scope of the power of the Holy Spirit. Mediated by the oil, the Holy Spirit confers power to 'body and soul', that is, 'the whole man'.[84] In the same way, "the oil upon the whole man" concerns the effect of the oil upon the whole man, that is, body and soul.[85]

Based upon the above considerations, we may conclude that it is plausible that Narsai knew only one pre-baptismal anointing, that is, the signing on the forehead.

We are able now to construct Narsai's rite as presented in table 2.

2.3   Concluding Comparison

When we compare the structure of both rites (see table 3 below), the following differences stand out. As a general observation, it is noteworthy that the most striking deviations are located in the pre-ʾrāzā /ʾrāzē unit, and the following may be listed. (1) While Theodore opens his rite with the registration, in Narsai's rite it concludes the pre-ʾrāzē rituals. (2) Theodore closes the pre-ʾrāzā /ʾrāzē rituals with the combined *apotaxis/syntaxis*, while Narsai starts his rite with the *apotaxis*. Furthermore, (3) in Narsai's rite the *apotaxis* and *syntaxis* are separated by the Lawsuit. (4) While Theodore's rite certainly contains a creed, it is not altogether clear whether the same is true for Narsai's rite. (5) Contrary to Theodore's rite, Narsai's process of initiation contains only one pre-baptismal anointing, the signing on the forehead.

Narsai is not the sole witness to the pattern *apotaxis*-lawsuit-*syntaxis* (or: *apotaxis*-'exorcism'[86]-*syntaxis*), but seems to be the earliest. Sebastian Brock has identified, translated and discussed three early Syriac baptismal commentaries (fifth through seventh centuries), labelled *A*, *C*, and *D*.[87] On the whole,

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83   22,368:1 (*s* :1); 22,368:8 (*s* :6).

84   This is in full agreement with Narsai's general anthropology. According to Narsai, 'image' (Gen. 1:26–27) refers to 'body and soul', that is, 'the whole man'. See McLeod, *Soteriology of Narsai* (2), 19 and his "Image of God," 459, 466.

85   In a similar way, Narsai can say concerning baptism that "the priest buries the whole man (ܠܟܠܗ ܐܢܫܐ)" (21,345:38; *s* :22–23).

86   See n57 above.

87   Brock, "Commentaries". *A* = British Library, Add. 14496, f. 23 (West Syrian, 10th cent.

TABLE 2   The structure of the baptismal rite of Narsai of Nisibis

Primary structural units	Secondary structural units		Primary structural units (classical division)
Rituals preceding the mysteries (pre-*ʾrāzē*)	– *Apotaxis* – Lawsuit – *Syntaxis* – Enrolment and sponsor		Pre-Baptismal Rituals
Rituals of the mysteries (*ʾrāzē*)	– Consecration of the oil – Signing on the forehead – Consecration of the water		
	– BAPTISM	– None	Baptism

	– Transitional rituals:
	  – Embrace and kiss
	  – Garment
	– No initiatory rituals
			Post-Baptismal Rituals

the oldest witness AR[88] has most in common with Narsai's rite, like the missing post-baptismal signing. Yet, AR has the sequence *apotaxis-syntaxis*-exorcism, a pattern that Brock admits is "obviously illogical".[89] Interestingly, however, it is the less archaic and more developed rites of C and D (sixth century or later) that attest the same pattern as Narsai: *apotaxis*-exorcism-*syntaxis*. How Narsai's rite is related to AR, C and D is obviously a complex issue and not the object of the present study. But supposing that Narsai was acquainted with AR or even used it,[90] we have important evidence here that Narsai's rite is not just a copy or projection of other rites, neither Theodore's nor any other we know of. Most

manuscript); C = Charfet 4/1, pp. 678–679 (West Syrian, 11th century manuscript); D = British Library, Add. 14539, ff. 67b–68b (West Syrian 10th cent. manuscript). Because A is almost identical to a text published by I.E. Rahmani (R), Brock combines A and R as one witness: AR. Since both C and D show a more developed rite than AR and are probably under the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius, Brock dates them in the sixth century or later. The commentary of George, bishop of the Arabs is dependent on GA on C and D (p. 58).

88   Which Brock, "Commentaries," 22 dates in the first half of the fifth century.
89   Brock, "Commentaries," 60.
90   As Brock, "Commentaries," 20 contends.

probably, then, Narsai's liturgical homilies reflect an actual rite of a particular East Syrian community in the fifth century.

One of the noteworthy differences between the rites of Theodore and Narsai concerns the pre-baptismal anointings. It is widely acknowledged today that the Syrian baptismal rite originally contained only the anointing of the head.[91] The praxis of the double anointing—head and body—is considered a later development, which became broadly accepted only in the fourth century.[92] This makes Narsai's rite the more archaic in this respect. While Theodore's rite is already expanded by a second pre-baptismal anointing, Narsai's rite is still in keeping with the older Syrian pattern.

Another remarkable difference concerning the ʾrāzā /ʾrāzē rituals is that Narsai's rite contains neither a post-baptismal signing, nor any other post-baptismal initiatory ritual. This again identifies Narsai's rite as more conservative than Theodore's, as it is generally known that the original Syrian pattern did not include a post-baptismal anointing or signing. Neither *The Acts of Thomas*, nor the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, nor Ephrem, nor *The History of John the Son of Zebedee* testifies of such a post-baptismal ritual.

To sum up, a careful comparison of the structure of both rites not only reveals important differences which need closer investigation (on the levels of sub-rites and meaning) and as such indicates that Narsai's rite is not just a copy or projection of Theodore's rite, but also discloses that the former is the more traditional and less evolved (although Narsai's rite also shows evidence of development, as we have seen).

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91   Much work has been done here by Gabriele Winkler, *Armenische Initiationsrituale*, see especially pp. 142–144, 169–174. Cf. her "Original Meaning" (see especially pp. 58, 61, 66, and 71 ff.) and "Prebaptismal Anointing". Winkler's position has been accepted and supported by many scholars. See e.g. Varghese, *Onctions*, 12; Brock, "Rites Baptismaux Syriens," 124 and his "Syrian Baptismal Ordines," 180–181; Serra, "Syrian Prebaptismal Anointing," 336; Kavanagh, *Shape of Baptism*, 41–41 and 71n5. However, the view is not without criticism, as will become clear from our fuller treatment of the (origin) of the pre-baptismal anointing on pp. 282 f. (cf. Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 75–82 and Bradshaw, *Search*, 149–153).

92   The origin of the full body anointing is complex; see Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 190. Not only do liturgical texts testify to a variety of interpretations of this ritual, the location within the rite itself varies too. It is also noteworthy that the use of Biblical references in the mystagogy of the anointing of the body is rather scarce. According to Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 191 "this may well be explained by the fact that the ceremony penetrated the rite under strongly pagan influence, rather than belonging to original biblical, or Jewish-Christian influence, as is the case with the post-baptismal anointing. Hence, the interpretative tradition was not as clear for this pre-baptismal anointing." Riley presents two possible cultural sources for the anointing of the body: the anointing of the sick and bathing customs (see pp. 191–192).

TABLE 3   A comparison of structures

Primary structural units	Secondary structural units *Theodore of Mopsuestia*	Secondary structural units *Narsai of Nisibis*	Primary structural units (classical division)
Rituals preceding the mystery/ies (pre-ʾrāzā / ʾrāzē)	– Enrolment and sponsor – Lawsuit (exorcism) – Creed and Lord's Prayer – Penitential prayer – *Apotaxis/Syntaxis*	– *Apotaxis* – Lawsuit – *Syntaxis* – Enrolment and sponsor	Pre-baptismal Rituals
Rituals of the mystery/ies (ʾrāzā / ʾrāzē)	– Consecration of the oil? – Signing on the forehead – Rising and *orarium* – Anointing of the body – Consecration of the water (during anointing of the body)	– Consecration of the oil – Signing on the forehead – Consecration of the water	
	– BAPTISM – None	– BAPTISM – None	Baptism

	– Transitional ritual:
	  – White garment
		– Transitional rituals:
		  – Embrace and kiss
		  – Garment
			Post-baptismal Rituals

	– Signing	– No initiatory rituals	

PART 2

Rituals Preceding the Mystery/ies

∵

Examination,[1] Sponsor, Enrolment

3.1 Theodore of Mopsuestia

3.1.1 *Description and Discussion of the Rituals*
Theodore describes the ritual as follows (italics mine):

> He, therefore, who is desirous of drawing near to baptism comes to the
> Church of God through which he expects to reach that life of the heav-
> enly abode. He ought to think that he is coming to be the citizen of a new
> and great city, and he should, therefore, show great care in everything that
> is required of him before his enrolment in it. He comes to the Church of
> God where he is received by a duly appointed person—as there is a habit
> to register those who draw near to baptism—who will question him about
> his mode of life in order to find out whether it possesses all the requisites
> of the citizenship of that great city. After he has abjured all the evil found
> in this world and cast it completely out of his mind, he has to show that
> he is worthy of the citizenship of the city and of his enrolment in it. This
> is the reason why, as if he were a stranger to the city and to its citizenship,
> a specially appointed person, who is from the city in which he is going to
> be enrolled and who is well versed in its mode of life, conducts him to the
> registrar and testifies (ܕܡܣܗܕ) for him to the effect that he is worthy of
> the city and of its citizenship and that, as he is not versed in the life of
> the city or in the knowledge of how to behave in it, he himself would be
> willing to act as a guide (ܗܕܝܐ)[2] to his inexperience.
>
> This rite is performed for those who are baptised by the person called
> *godfather*,[3] who, however, does not make himself responsible for them in

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connection with future sins, as each one of us answers for his own sins before God. He only bears witness to what the catechumen has done and to the fact that he has prepared himself in the past to be worthy of the city and of its citizenship. He is justly called a *sponsor* because by his words (the catechumen) is deemed worthy to receive baptism …

It is for this reason that as regards you also who draw near to the gift of baptism, a duly appointed person inscribes your name in the Church book, together with that of your *godfather*, who answers for you and becomes your guide (ܣܗܕܐ) in the city and the leader (ܗܕܝܐ) of your citizenship therein.[4] This is done in order that you may know that you are, long before the time and while still on the earth, enrolled in heaven, and that your godfather who is in it is possessed of great diligence to teach you, who are a stranger and a newcomer to that great city, all the things that pertain to it and to its citizenship, so that you should be conversant with its life without any trouble and anxiety.[5]

The candidate's ritual journey starts with his enrolment. In order to fulfil this prerequisite, he reports himself to the 'registrar of baptisms'[6], accompanied with his sponsor (ܥܪܒܐ).[7] This sponsor has a dual role of both a witness-guarantor and a father-guide.[8]

(1,25:22 (1,15)), they are a translation of the same Syriac word ܥܪܒܐ (compare *s* 1,153:15, *s* 1,153:18, and *s* 1,155:1). *T&D* and *BS* translate consistently with "garant" and "Bürge" respectively. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, 107, is probably right that 'godfather' is an anachronism and therefore not a fortunate choice (see also pp. 84, 116).

4   The Syriac words ܣܗܕܐ and ܗܕܝܐ, rendered by Mingana with 'guide' and 'leader', are better translated here as 'witness' (cf. Sokoloff, 973b) and 'guide' (cf. Payne Smith, 100a). According to Mingana's translation, both ܣܗܕܐ and ܗܕܝܐ refer to the sponsor's responsibility to initiate the candidate into the way of life of the city. It seems more accurate, however, to interpret ܣܗܕܐ as referring to the sponsor's role as witness of the candidate's preparation (in harmony with ܣܗܕܘܬܐ above) and to denote ܗܕܝܐ as his role as guide (in harmony with the earlier ܗܕܝܐ, which Mingana rightly renders 'guide'). Interpreted in this way, the sponsor is both a witness and a guide. See also my alternative translation of this passage below.

5   1,24:30–26:26 (1,14–16); *s* 1,152:20–155:6.

6   As Mingana identifies the "duly appointed person" (ܗܘ ܓܒܪܐ ܕܠܗܕܐ ܡܛܝܒ), see 1,26:17 (1,16; *s* 1,154:23) and 26n4; cf. 1,25:1 (1,14; *s* 1,153:1) and 25n11. *T&D* and *BS* translate with "celui qui est préposé à cet office" and "die dafür bestellte Person" respectively.

7   Mingana vocalises ܥܪܒܐ as ܥܲܪܵܒܵܐ, which can refer to ܥܲܪܵܒܵܐ ('one who gives security, pledge'; Sokoloff, 1134b), but also to ܥܪܵܒܵܐ ('guarantee, surety'; Sokoloff, 1134a) and ܥܪܵܒܵܐ ('sunset'; Sokoloff, 1134 a+b). As Narsai's vocalised manuscript reads ܥܲܪܵܒܵܐ (22:363:16) and in order to avoid confusion, I will always give the full vocalisation ܥܲܪܵܒܵܐ, except when quoting Mingana's Syriac text (which is usually not vocalised).

8   For this terminology I am indebted to Dujarier, "Sponsorship," 48.

Theodore reveals neither the identity nor the ecclesiastical status of the sponsor. Burnish gives much weight to Mingana's translation of "a specially appointed person". This 'being appointed', according to Burnish,

> leaves us to question the means of appointment of the specially appointed person. Was he or she appointed for each candidate, selected on the grounds of their ability to be of most help to the candidate, or were they appointed to a group of candidates? By whom were they appointed? For how long was it anticipated that their appointment should last?[9]

Although I am in sympathy with Burnish's conclusion that—given the personal involvement in the candidate's spiritual education—each sponsor was probably responsible for one candidate at a time,[10] I cannot accept his argument, namely, that the sponsor is 'a specially appointed person'. This "specially appointed person, who is from the city" is Mingana's rendering of ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܩ ܐ܏ܐܢ̈ܫ ܐܚ̈ܝܢܘܗܝ ܕܡܕܝܢܬܐ.[11] However, a more literal translation of this phrase yields: 'someone from the relatives/kin of that city'.[12] Mingana's 'specially appointed person' is clearly a somewhat free interpretation of the Syriac, which, as it stands, does not sustain any speculation concerning the way of 'appointing' of the sponsor.[13]

As a witness-guarantor, the sponsor guarantees the candidate's integrity. He "testifies for him to the effect that he is worthy of the city and of its citizenship".[14] It is this particular responsibility which explains his being named a 'sponsor'. The Syriac ܥܪܒܐ "is obviously cognate to the Greek ἀρραβών. Its most common usage is financial and legal, and the person who is a sponsor ... gives a pledge, makes a solemn promise, offers himself and his word as surety".[15]

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9   Burnish, "Godfather," 559.

10   Ibid., 559. Cf. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, 109.

11   *s* 1,153:8. The Syriac manuscript has the negation ... ܠܐ ܐܢܫ, but *T&D*, 345n2 propose to read ܠܘܐ, 'to accompany', which is followed by *BS*.

12   For the translation of ܐܚ̈ܝܢܘܗܝ (the plural of ܐܚܝܢ with the suffix 3.f.s.) with 'relatives'/'kin', see Sokoloff, 366a. *T&D*: "quelqu' un de ceux qui sont attachés à cette cité"; *BS*: "jemanden aus dieser Stadt".

13   For this insight I am indebted to Mor Polycarpus Augin Aydin—Metropolitan and Patriarchal Vicar for the Archdiocese of the Netherlands of the Syriac Orthodox Church—who put me on the right track here (Mor Polycarpus, e-mail message to author (1)).

14   1,25:12–13 (1,14); *s* 1,153:10–11.

15   Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 94–95. Burnish, "Godfather," 560 presumes "the probability of the use" of ἀρραβών in the original Greek text. In that case, Theodore's term would differ from that of Chrysostom who employs ἀναδεχόμενος instead (*Stav.* 2.15; ed. Kaczynkski, *Catecheses Baptismales*, 344, but cf. Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 12a, who contends

Also Theodore himself emphasises this relation between role and title as he explains that "[h]e is justly called a sponsor because by his words (the cate-chumen) is deemed worthy to receive baptism".[16] Roques[17] seems right that in a corresponding way, the sponsor is also a witness of the Church vis-à-vis the catechumen—who becomes acquainted with the Church by means of the words and deeds of his sponsor—although this role more or less coincides with the sponsor's responsibility as father-guide (see below).

How actively is the neophyte himself involved in the examination? Accord-ing to Mingana's translation, the registrar "will question him [the baptizand, NW] about his mode of life." This seems to suggest that the candidate himself is interrogated before the sponsor makes a testimony on his behalf. This interro-gation may or may not imply a provisional reply of the candidate himself. The latter idea seems reinforced by Mingana's translation that the sponsor "answers for" the novice.[18] Both translations are dubious, however. The rendering "who will *question him* about his mode of life …" is more explicit than the Syriac ܡܫܐܠ ܕܡ ܚܠ ܕܘܒܪ, which may more literally be translated as "he inquires *concerning his* mode of life …".[19] The direct context of the second phrase under consideration runs thus (Syriac and Mingana's translation):

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that ἀναδεχόμενος was probably the Greek lying beneath the Syriac ܚ݁ܢܬ݂ܐ). In Chrysos-tom's catecheses, the ἀναδεχόμενος is 'one who goes surety for a borrower' (*Stav.* 2.15; ed. Kaczynski, II, 344; tr. Harkins, 48–49; cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 55–56). So, the basic meaning of ἀρραβών and ἀναδεχόμενος is similar. Wenger, *Huit Catéchèses*, 75–76, 142–143n3 adds another meaning to ἀναδεχόμενος, which is faithfully articulated by Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 56: "A. Wenger considers ἀναδεχόμενος the sponsor's official title, and makes the following interesting observation. The term, literally meaning 'one who receives,' is philo-logically similar to the Latin *susceptus* used in the Western Church, beginning at least with Tertullian, to designate the newly-baptized, who was 'received' (*susceptus*) by his sponsor as he emerged from the baptismal font. Thus Wenger sees an indication in the official title that the sponsor received the newly-baptized as he came up out of the waters." Such a praxis may indeed be implied with Chrysostom's admonition to the sponsors: "If it is a noble thing to lead to a zeal for virtue those who are in no way related to us, much more should we fulfil this precept in the case of the one whom we receive as a spiritual son (τέκνου πνευματικοῦ ἀναδεχόμεθα). You, the sponsors (ἀναδεχόμενοι), have learned that no slight danger hangs over your heads if you are remiss." (*Stav.* 2.16; ed. Kaczynski, II, 346; tr. Harkins, 49). In Theodore's homilies, however, there is no indication whatsoever, that the sponsor was involved in the water rite or 'received' the new born Christian.

16   1,25:22–23 (1,15); *s* 1,153 :18–20.

17   Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 14.

18   1,26:19 (1,16).

19   1,25:2–3 (1,14); *s* 1,153:2. BS and T&D have similar translations: "Man erkundigt sich nach seinem Lebenswandel"; "Or il s'informe de ses mœurs".

ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܪܐ ܐܦ ܠܟܘܢ ܠܗܢ ܕܩܪܒܝܢ ܠܡܘܗܒܬܐ
ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ: ܗܘ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܬܬܣܝܡ ܠܗܕܐ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ: ܪܫܡ ܒܟܬܒܐ
ܕܥܕܬܐ ܠܫܡܟ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܗܢܐ ܣܗܕܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ: ܘܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܐܦ ܡܕܒܪܢܐ ܕܗܝ
ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܘܕܘܒܪܐ ܕܬܡܢ: ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܥܪܒܐ: ܕܬܕܥ ܕܡܢ
ܗܫܐ ܡܢ ܟܕ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܐܢܬ ܪܫܝܡ ܐܢܬ ܒܫܡܝܐ: ܐܝܟܐ ܕܥܪܒܟ ܒܛܝܠܘܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ
ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܕܢܠܦܟ ...

It is for this reason that as regards you also who draw nigh unto the gift
of baptism, a duly appointed person inscribes your name in the Church
book, together with that of your godfather, who answers for you and
becomes your guide in the city and the leader of your citizenship therein.
This is done in order that you may know that you are, long before the time
and while still on earth, enrolled in heaven, and that your godfather who
is in it is possessed of great diligence to teach you ...[20]

Following *T&D* and *BS*,[21] I propose a different translation of this passage:

For this reason then, you who approach the gift of baptism, he who is
appointed for this task, inscribes in the Church book your name, (and)
also that of him who is a witness, and who is also a guide of that city and
its way of life. I say then (your) 'sponsor', so that you may know that from
now on you are inscribed in heaven, where your sponsor shows great care
for you ...

If this interpretation is correct, the text does not explicitly sustain the idea of
the sponsor 'answering for' a previously interrogated candidate. (Which does
not mean, of course, that it could not have happened this way.) By conse-
quence, we remain uninformed concerning the exact procedure of the inter-
rogation. All we know is that the registrar inquires concerning the baptizand's
mode of life—whether by interrogating the candidate, followed by the spon-

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20   1,26:16–24 (1,16); *S* 1,154:21–155:4.
21   *T&D*: "A cause de cela donc, vous qui vous présentez au don du baptême, celui qui est
      préposé à cet office, vous inscrit dans le livre de l'Église; il joint dans le livre ton nom à
      toi à celui aussi, soit du témoin, soit du guide de cette ville et de cette discipline, je veux
      dire ton garant; en sorte que tu saches que déjà, dès maintenant, tu es inscrit au ciel, où
      ton garant a grand soin de t'apprendre à toi ...". *BS*: "Deshalb also trägt euch, die ihr zur
      Spendung der Taufe hinzutrete, *die dafür bestellte Person ins Kirchenbuch ein. Sie fügt im
      Buch deinen Namen hinzu, auch den des Zeugen, auch den des Begleiters in jener Stadt und
      des Unterrichtes*; ich sage: 'dein Bürge', damit du weißt, daß du von nun an im Himmel
      eingeschrieben bist, wo dein Bürge große Sorge für dich aufwendet ..." (his italics).

sor's answer, or by directly questioning the latter—and that the sponsor tes-
tifies for him. Theodore explicitly remarks that this testimony concerns 'only'
the behaviour and preparation of the baptizand up to the interrogation, as the
sponsor "does not make himself responsible for them in connection with future
sins, as each one of us answers for his own sins before God."[22]

When the outcome of this inquiry is positive, both the names of the candi-
date and the sponsor are registered in the Church book.[23] From that moment
on, the sponsor's role is that of a father-guide to instruct the novice in the prin-
ciples of the new heavenly life. This is necessary as the candidate is "a stranger
and a newcomer to that great city"[24] and "has no experience yet (ܕܠܐ ܥܕܟܝܠ
ܡܠܝ ܢܣܝܘܢܐ) with this city and its way of life (ܕܗܕܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܘܕܕܘܒܪܗ ܕܒܗ)
and does not know how one should behave in it (ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܗ)".[25] Although the
candidate has been thoroughly instructed in the principles of the new life—
especially by Theodore's exploration on the Creed and the Lord's Prayer—he
is still inexperienced concerning the life of the city itself. This does not imply
that, up to now, he has no experience of practical Christian living whatsoever.
To the contrary, this would be quite impossible for someone preparing for bap-
tism. After all, the main concern of the examination is the baptizand's 'mode of
life' (ܕܘܒܪܗ).[26] The candidate's inexperience seems best understood, therefore,
with reference to his recent enrolment. That is, before his registration he was
not able to experience the city and its way of life as such for the simple reason
that he was not yet a citizen. Thus, having been enrolled, he is still "a stranger
and a newcomer to that great city" and needs a guide to officially initiate him

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22 1,25:17–19 (1,14); S 1,153:15–16. Interestingly, John Chrysostom has quite a different view con-
    cerning the responsibility of the sponsor. As spiritual fathers, they were even accountable
    for the post-baptismal behaviour of their spiritual sons (*Stav.* 2.15; ed. Kaczynski, II, 344;
    tr. Harkins, 49; cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 57). Therefore, I cannot consent to the position
    of Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, 114, who asserts that "[p]rior to the fifth century, the
    sponsor's role was entirely prebaptismal and there is no reliable evidence for an official
    postbaptismal function for the adult sponsor."

23 The registration of the sponsor's name is also attested by Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical
    Hierarchy* II,2.5 and D, an anonymous early baptismal commentary published by Sebastian
    Brock. See his "Commentaries," 36–37 (D 14), where it is said that "[t]he inscribing of the
    sponsor's name is a good reminder of his diligence towards the person who is approaching
    (baptism)".

24 1,26:24 (1,16); S 1,155:3–4.

25 S 1,153 :11–13. My own translation. Cf. *T&D*: "lui qui n'a pas acquis l'expérience de cette cité
    et de son genre de vie et ne sait pas comment il lui faut y être"; *BS*: "er hat ja noch keine
    Erfahrung mit dieser Stadt und ihrem Lebenswandel und weiß nicht, wie man sich dort
    verhalten soll."

26 1,25:3 (1,14); S 1,153:2. *T&D*: "mœurs"; *BS*: "Lebenswandel".

into the city and its customs.[27] This 'catechesis in action' is especially reflected in the living example of the sponsor.[28]

Roques contends that the registration of the name of the sponsor indicates the official instalment of his duty as 'guide'.[29] This seems to be only half the truth, however. Concerning the enrolment of the sponsor, together with that of his pupil, Theodore says:

> ... he who is appointed for this task, inscribes in the Church book your name, (and) also that of him who is a witness (ܣܗܕܐ), and who is also a guide (ܗܕܝܐ) of that city and its way of life.[30]

It seems, then, that the registration of the sponsor's name concerns his dual responsibility. On the one hand, the sponsor's enrolment confirms his past role as witness, on the other hand, it officially installs him as the candidate's guide.[31]

For how long was the sponsor expected to operate as the candidate's guide, and what were his duties? Roques asserts that, as his guide, the sponsor "without any doubt" accompanied the candidate to "all liturgies and to all the instructions".[32] Although this seems too boldly expressed, it is a feasible thought that the sponsor attended his pupil to the daily instructions.[33] Contra Roques, how-

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27 Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 46–49. Theodore mainly employs two different but similar words to denote the city's way of life: ܕܘܒܪܐ/ܕܘܒܪܐ (1,153:8,18; 1,154:6,18; 1,155:1) and ܥܝܕܐ/ܥܝܕܐ (1,153:6,9,12; 1,154:1,5; 1,155:4,5). Both terms may have the meaning of 'way/manner of life', 'custom(s)'. For ܕܘܒܪܐ see Payne Smith, 84b–85a and Sokoloff, 277a–b. For ܥܝܕܐ see Payne Smith, 102b and Sokoloff, 337b–338a.

28 Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 45.

29 Ibid., 49–50.

30 Own translation; *s* 1,154:23–155:1; cf. Mingana 1,26:17–20.

31 This is not to deny that sponsor and candidate already had a close relationship preceding the enrolment, but only to say that up to that point the sponsor was not *officially* appointed as the candidate's guide. Before this instalment, the sponsor probably fulfilled the role of an unofficial instructor and guide, as Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 51 puts it: "Avant que le candidat au baptême soit inscrit, le garant pourra lui donner des conseils, lui montrer l'exemple, l'encourager, l'appeler à le rejoindre, il pourra authentiquement 'témoigner' d'une vie chrétienne mais il ne deviendra vraiment guide au plein sens de ce mot, que lorsque son catéchumène se trouvera auprès de lui et sera devenu au jour de l'inscription, son compagnon de chemin." See also n40.

32 Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 44: "Sans doute, il l'accompagnera à toutes les liturgies et à toutes les catéchèses".

33 Both John Chrysostom (*Stav.* 2.15–16; ed. Kaczynski, II, 344, 346 (= 3/2,15–16); tr. Harkins, 48–49) and Egeria (*It.* 46.1; ed. Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 296; tr. Wilkinson, 162) bear witness to the practice. Although Chrysostom does not explicitly mention the presence of the sponsors as Egeria does ("the fathers and the mothers"), from the fact that he addresses

ever, I contend that the baptismal catechesis preceded enrolment,[34] and there-
fore also the official appointment of the sponsor as guide, which implies that
accompanying the candidate to the daily instructions cannot be seen as the
official duty of the sponsor as 'guide'. This objection does not hold, of course, for
any responsibility of the sponsor after enrolment. As Theodore remains silent
on the matter, however, we cannot tell what this 'guidance' exactly consisted of.
Concerning the sponsor's responsibility during the following rituals, Theodore
mentions only that, after the signing on the forehead, the sponsor spreads an
orarium of linen on the crown of the head of his protégé and makes him stand
erect.[35] During the signing, the bishop declares that the baptizand is a "soldier
of the true King and a citizen of heaven".[36] Concerning the rising of the candi-
date and the spreading of the *orarium* on his head, Theodore explains:

> By your rising from your genuflexion you show that you have cast away
> your ancient fall, that you have no more communion with earth and
> earthly things, that your adoration and prayer to God have been accepted,
> that you have received the stamp which is the sign of your election to the
> ineffable military service, that you have been called to heaven, and that
> you ought henceforth to direct your course to its life and citizenship while
> spurning all earthly things.
>   The linen which he spreads on the crown of your head denotes the
> freedom to which you have been called. You were before standing bare-
> headed, as this is the habit of the exiles and the slaves, but after you have
> been signed he throws on your head linen, which is the emblem of the
> freedom to which you have been called. Freemen (lit. "men such as these")
> are in the habit of spreading linen on their heads, and it serves them as
> an adornment both in the house and in the market-place.[37]

The *orarium* of linen is a symbol of the freedom of citizenship, which the bap-
tizand only receives after having experienced the cluster of rituals from the
registration up to the signing on the forehead. This reveals that the benefits
of the enrolment become ritually effectuated by the Lawsuit, the confession
of faith and prayer, the penitential prayer, the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, and the sign-

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them personally we may deduce that they were attending instruction. See also Curtin,
Baptismal Liturgy, 92.

34   See p. 18.
35   2,47:14–16 (2,19).
36   2,47:11 (2,19); *s* 2,178:9–10.
37   2,47:16–31 (2,19); *s* 2,178:13–23.

ing on the forehead.[38] In this sense, we could speak of the enrolment as a process, and since it is the sponsor himself who spreads the *orarium* on the candidate's head—which is the final act of the sponsor described—it seems likely that this ritual marks the end of the sponsor's official responsibility to guide his pupil through the city. Having received the *orarium* of a freeman, the novice has definitively left behind his former position as an exile and a slave; he is no longer a 'stranger' in need of a guide anymore.[39] This view, that the sponsor's official duty is accomplished with his protégé receiving the *orarium* not only explains the complete disappearance of the sponsor from the scene after this ritual, but also seems to accord with our earlier observation that the sponsor—as a guarantor—is only responsible for the candidate's behaviour up to the examination.[40] Since the enrolment possibly occurred only four days before baptism[41]—and the sponsor was officially installed only then—this official sponsorship only lasted for such a short period.

3.1.2   *Function and Meaning of the Rituals*

According to Theodore's homilies, the enrolment probably took place on Holy Wednesday or somewhat earlier and initiated the baptismal rite, which was concluded by baptism during the Easter Vigil. This distinguishes Theodore's rite from the practice of Jerusalem and of Chrysostom where we encounter an enrolment at the beginning of Lent.[42] Since the enrolment probably occurred

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38   Theodore explains that the candidate's enrolment "is not effected to no purpose and accidentally only, but after a great judgment had taken place on your behalf." (1,26:28–20 (1,16); *s* 1,155:7–9). The assistance of the exorcists is needed to effect that "we might be delivered for ever from his [the Devil's] servitude, and allowed to live in perfect freedom, and enjoy the happiness of our present enrolment." (1,31:10–12 (1,22)). Concerning the recitation of the profession of faith, it is said that it is in the names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit that "you receive the happiness of this enrolment which consists in the participation in heavenly benefits" (1,33:22–24 (1,26)). Concluding the penitential prayer, the candidate is comforted with the message that he will be brought to freedom and granted to participate in the heavenly benefits (1,37:11–13 (1,4)).

39   Cf. Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 52.

40   Such a non-responsibility for the neophyte's conduct would be hard to reconcile with a lifelong official sponsorship. This does not exclude the obvious situation that the sponsor and his pupil will remain closely connected, not only because they probably already have a close relation up to the moment of baptism but the more since the sponsor always remains the novice's 'spiritual father'. Cf. n22 and 31 above.

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42   Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 83; Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 26; Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 50; Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 19–23. Daniélou's approach, however, is strongly harmonising which results in a reading of Theodore's rite through the lens of Egeria's testimony.

after the deliverance of the three baptismal homilies,[43] this registration does not coincide with election for baptism and concludes, instead of initiates, the pre-baptismal instruction. Contrary to contemporary practice, then, the enrolment in Theodore's rite does not embody the border line between catechumenate and enlightenment, but initiates the final phase of the process of initiation, the baptismal rite itself.[44]

Although Theodore does not comment on it, it seems obvious that the candidates constitue a select group from a larger population of those interested in the Christian belief (whether formal catechumens or not). After all, the contents of this catechesis, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and particularly the specific instructions concerning the baptismal rite itself, are relevant only for those about to be baptised. Being that the case, it makes one to wonder what is the purpose of an examination/enrolment of those who have already received the full package of baptismal catechesis? Is it purely conditional, fully ceremonial, or maybe somewhere in between? On the one hand, the description of the examination gives the impression of being a serious matter and the candidate must comply with a number of important conditions before being enrolled. Furthermore, although not positioned at the beginning of Lent, the examination still has its logical place at the beginning of the baptismal rite and functions as the entrance to the following rituals. On the other hand, it seems rather odd to suppose that the rejection of the candidate is still a serious option, after having received full baptismal instruction. It is also worth noting that, contrary to the testimony of Egeria for example, Theodore nowhere even mentions the possibility of failure and rejection.[45] I suppose, then, that dismissal of the candidate at this phase is not a real, but only a theoretical option. Normally speaking, every candidate is expected to pass the test. That is to say, the examination primarily functions as a ritual.[46] Yet, it still has the *character* of an

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43   See p. 18.

44   We can only speculate about the reason for this difference. One possibility is that this construction aimed at retaining the demarcation between a (shortened) period of instruction (catechumenate) and the final phase of 'enlightenment'. This would suggest that the catechumenate began with the delivery of the first catechetical homily.

45   So Egeria testifies that the baptismal examination may have a positive or a negative outcome: "And if his inquiries show him that someone has not committed any of these misdeeds, he himself puts down his name; but if someone is guilty he is told to go away, and the bishop tells him that he is to amend his ways before he may come to the font." (*It.* 45.4; ed. Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 294, 296; tr. Wilkinson, 162).

46   In a way, this is comparable to a present-day matrimonial ceremony during which the future husband and wife solemnly declare to be faithful to each other. Although the ritual is undoubtedly important, both legally and emotionally, at this stage of the process—and

objective baptismal test; the candidate's mode of life is expected to meet "all the requisites of the citizenship of that great city".[47] Both the ritual and Theodore's description of it are of a protreptic nature and exhort the candidate to take his initiation with the utmost seriousness.

For Theodore, the enrolment is not just an administrative confirmation of the positive outcome of the examination. It is a symbolic expression of the registration in the heavenly book,[48] which is realised by baptism[49] (italics mine):

> We rightly draw near now to the Church of God because of our deliverance from tribulations and our delight in good things, and because *we expect to be enrolled in heaven through the gift of the holy baptism.*[50]

And:

> As long as you are mortal by nature you are not able to enter the abode of heaven, but after you have cast away such a nature in baptism and have risen also with Christ through baptism, and received the symbol of the new birth which we are expecting, *you will be seen as a citizen of heaven and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven.*[51]

This effect of the mystery of baptism is embedded in Theodore's general view of the Church as related to heaven (italics mine):

> He who wishes to draw near to the gift of the holy baptism comes to the Church of God, which Christ our Lord showed to be *a symbol of the heavenly things* to the faithful in this world, when He said: "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." He showed in this that

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under normal circumstances—it is to be expected that both parties already consent to the marriage.

47 1,25:4–5 (1,14); *s* 1,153:3–4.

48 Cf. Bruns, *Himmel,* 340.

49 Yet—in harmony with Theodore's sacramental view in general—the full realisation of this enrolment 'in symbol' is only accomplished in the coming world initiated by the resurrection (cf. 1,24:9–15 (1,13); 2,45:9–14 (2,15)).

50 1,30:18–22 (1,21); *s* 159:10–13.

51 2,44:26–32 (2,14); *s* 2,175:6–11. See also 1,20:8–12 (1,4); 1,20:29–21:6 (1,5); 1,27:15–21 (1,17) and 1,34:14–15 (1,27).

He granted to the Church the power that any one who becomes related to it
should also be related to the heavenly things, and any one who becomes a
stranger to it should also be clearly a stranger to the heavenly things.

Owing to the fact that to those who are at the head of the Church is
allotted the task of governing it, it is to them that He referred in His say-
ing to the blessed Peter that they have the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,
and things that are bound by them on earth shall be bound in heaven, and
things that are loosed by them on earth shall be loosed in heaven; not
in the sense that they are masters of men in it, but in the sense that *the*
Church received power from God that those who are related to it and under
the care of those who are at its head, acquire by necessity a relationship with
heaven, inasmuch as those who are outside this have no association of any
kind with heavenly things.[52]

By the Church and its mysteries, man becomes related to heaven. As Greer puts
it: "… the Church is simply the means whereby we are made partakers of the
benefits of the Second Age."[53] *The* instrument God has granted the Church as a
window to heaven is baptism, by which man becomes born again and enrolled
in the heavenly Kingdom.

Furthermore, the heavenly enrolment is not just an isolated concept, but
is strongly connected to Theodore's fully developed idea of the Kingdom of
heaven as a city, the antitype of the Greek *polis*:[54]

Christ our Lord established a kingdom in heaven, and established it there
as a city in which He has His kingdom, which the blessed Paul calls
"Jerusalem which is above, free, and mother of us all," since it is in it that
we are expecting to dwell and abide. That city is full of innumerable com-
panies of angels and men who are all immortal and immutable. Indeed
the blessed Paul said: "You are come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the
living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of
angels, and to the Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven."
He calls the firstborn those who are immortal and immutable, like those
who are worthy of the adoption of sons of whom our Lord said that "they

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52   1,23:4–28 (1,11); *s* 1,150:22–151:14.
53   Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 76.
54   Drawing heavily on Philippians 3:20. Cf. 1,20:5–6 (1,4); 1,25:30–31 (1,15); 3,65:5–8 (3,21).
       According to Bruns, *Himmel*, 337–338, Theodore would have developed his *polis* idea
       mainly for apologetic reasons in order to counter the *polis*-ideal of Emperor Julian.

are the children of God because they are the children of the resurrection";
and they are enrolled in heaven as its inhabitants.

> … Those who draw near to Him in this world He wished them to be,
> through religion and faith, as in the symbol of the heavenly things, and
> He so constituted the Church as to be a symbol of the heavenly things;
> and He wished that those who believe in Him should live in it.[55]

Analogous to the custom in antiquity to register new citizens in the city ar-
chives—which included certain privileges—the baptismal candidate acquires
his citizenship of heaven by the mystery of baptism.[56] This puts in perspective
Theodore's notion of a heavenly enrolment effected by baptism.

At the same time, however, Theodore contends that it is already the ritual of
the enrolment *itself* by which the baptizand is registered and becomes a citizen
of heaven (italics mine):

> For this reason then, you who approach the gift of baptism, he who is
> appointed for this task, inscribes in the Church book your name, (and)
> also that of him who is a witness, and who is also a guide of that city and
> its way of life. I say then (your) 'sponsor', so that you may know that *from
> now on* (lit. already, from here) *you are inscribed in heaven*, where your
> sponsor shows great care for you …[57]

How is it possible that heavenly citizenship, which is acquired by baptism,
seems already granted by the ritual of the enrolment? The solution to this para-
dox has two intertwined threads, one ecclesiological, and one ritual. As "the
symbol of the heavenly things", the Church is the visible type of the heavenly
city.[58] Therefore, the candidate who approaches the Church in order to be bap-
tised, "ought to think that he is coming to be the citizen of a new and great
city."[59] Along these lines, the notion of the Church as a type of the heavenly
city becomes further materialised. As it is most natural for someone longing
for citizenship first to become enrolled and then to experience his freedom
and privileges, similarly, the baptismal candidate first has to register himself
to consequently, as a citizen, enjoy the benefits of the 'new and great city'. So,

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55   1,23:29–24:20 (1,12–13); *S* 1,151:15–152:12.

56   Bruns, *Himmel*, 339. Cf. Van Unnik, "Παρρησία," 14.

57   *S* 1,154:21–155:3. Own translation, following *T&D* (1,16) and *BS* (1,16), see above.

58   See also 1,27:15–21 (1,17). Cf. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 77.

59   1,24:32–33 (1,14).

although enrolment is rooted in baptism and would be meaningless if not in some way connected to this central ritual, the typology of Church and heavenly city enables Theodore to develop a symbolic reality in which the Church as the earthly representative of the heavenly sphere is able to administer benefits in a direct but symbolic way.

This all is further understood if we recall our earlier statement that the whole of the baptismal rite is in fact a ritualisation of baptism, its ritual centre, which grants meaning to the whole.[60] In an anticipatory way, then, the benefits of baptism may be conferred by earlier rituals, but only in relation to the water rite itself by which these benefits are fully realised. It is worth reminding ourselves of Riley's remark here that the process of initiation "is seen not as a linear series of points on a straight line, but rather as a circle or ellipse, as a totality, the centre of which can 'illogically' influence the other parts, even in an anticipatory way."[61] In a proleptic way then, although becoming fully enrolled by baptism, the baptizand is already considered as 'registered in heaven' by the ritual of the enrolment.

From the enrolment onwards, 'citizenship' remains an important concept throughout Theodore's baptismal homilies, although it is to become fully realised only in the resurrection.

3.2   Narsai of Nisibis

3.2.1   *Description and Discussion of the Rituals*

Narsai gives the following description of the enrolment:

> A sponsor also he brings with him into the court, that he may come in and bear witness to his preparation and his sincerity. With sincerity he protests that he will abide in love of the truth; and his companion becomes surety (saying): 'Yea, true is the *proof* [62] of his soul.' He becomes as a guide to his words and his actions; and he shews him the conduct of spiritual life. He calls (or reads) his name, and presents him before the guards (i.e. the priests), that they may name him heir, and son, and citi-

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60   See p. 72.

61   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 136.

62   Connolly has "protestation" here, but ܟܘܣܒ is closer to "proof", "trial" (Payne Smith, 39a). A more dynamic translation of the phrase would be: "Indeed, he is worthy!" (I am indebted here to Mor Polycarpus, e-mail message to the author (2)).

zen. In the books the priest enters the name of the lost one, and he brings it in and places it in the archives (ἀρχεῖα) of the King's books.[63]

In Narsai's rite, the enrolment is not the opening ritual, but succeeds the *apotaxis*, the lawsuit and the *syntaxis*. As we will establish below, the initiand was probably in a kneeling position during the ritual of the enrolment.[64] In the same way as in Theodore's rite, the candidate is assisted by a sponsor (ܣܗܕܐ), who has a similar role of witness-guarantor and father-guide.[65] As a witness-guarantor the sponsor bears witness to the neophyte's "preparation (ܛܘܝܒܐ) and his sincerity". It is possible that ܛܘܝܒܐ refers to a preceding catechumenal preparation. However, another possible translation of ܛܘܝܒܐ is "readiness, willingness".[66] In that case, ܛܘܝܒܐ does not basically allude to the preceding period of formation, but to the candidate's condition on the threshold of enrolment, which, of course, is as such a result of his sincere preparation, the precise form of which we remain ignorant of. Anyhow, it is most likely that the sponsor was in some way involved with his protégé's preparation in order to make a reliable testimony of his way of life. That sponsor and candidate were already

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63   22,363:28–39; *s* :16–22. Additions between brackets are Connolly's. There are three other passages where the ritual of the enrolment is mentioned, but not described: "Lo, he brings them, as it were, into a furnace by means of their words; and he exacts from them the one confession of the name of the Creator. As a pen the (divine) Nod holds him spiritually, and inscribes (and) writes body and soul in the book of life" (22,359:6–12); "The priest stands as a mediator, and asks him: 'Of whom dost thou wish to become a servant from henceforth?' He learns from him whom he wishes to call Master; and then he inscribes him in the number of the firstborns of the height" (22,359:24–28); "They give to the priest a promise by the words of their minds; and he brings in, reads (it) before the good-pleasure of God. The chart which is the door of the royal house he holds in his hands; and from the palace he has (received) authority to inscribe (the names of) men" (22,367:12–16). Ferguson, *Baptism*, 703, suggests that "[a]n enrolment or turning in one's name for baptism may be alluded to in the words about writing 'body and soul in the book of life'" (the first passage quoted above). This suggestion of an enrolment *for* (i.e. preceding) initiation does not seem right to me, however. Like the other two, the passage witnesses the same pattern with the confession preceding the enrolment, which, most likely, refers to one and the same ritual as more fully described in 22,363:28–39 (Witkamp, "Critical Comparison," 526–527). Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the first two passages precede the more detailed discussion of the enrolment, while the latter succeeds it. In each of them, Narsai seems to poetically summarise the rituals he elaborates on in the present homily. As such, these reiterations almost appear like a refrain of Narsai's panegyric on the baptismal rite.

64   See p. 197.

65   22,363:28–36; *s* :16–22.

66   Sokoloff, 516b.

familiar with each other seems also implied with the phrase "A sponsor also he brings with him (ܐܝܬܐ ܥܡܗ) into the court".

Before the sponsor makes his case, the novice gives a testimony of his own behaviour and intentions before the priests: "With sincerity he protests (ܡܦܝܣ) that he will abide in love of the truth".[67] Next, the sponsor confirms the baptizand's solemn declaration, saying: "Yea, true is the proof (ܩܘܫܬܐ) of his soul"[68] and he "calls (*or* reads) his name, and presents him before the guards (i.e. the priests), that they may name him heir, and son, and citizen."[69] Based upon both testimonies, the bishop 'inscribes'[70] the name of the baptizand in the 'books' (ܟܬܒ̈ܐ) and places them in the 'archives of the King's books' (ܐܪܟܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ).[71] It is worth noting that Narsai, contrary to Theodore, does not mention the sponsor being enrolled.

After the rite of initiation, the sponsor remains responsible for the new-comer as a father-guide concerning which Narsai says: "He [the sponsor, NW] becomes as a guide (ܡܗܕܝܢܐ) to his [the candidate's, NW] words and his actions; and he shews him the conduct of spiritual life."[72] Like a child, the novice has to be tutored into the customs and ways of the new spiritual life. The duration of this guidance remains unclear.

3.2.2   *Function and Meaning of the Rituals*

Discussing the position of the enrolment in Theodore's rite, we noted that this ritual did no longer take place at the beginning of Lent, as in the rites of Jerusalem and Chrysostom, but had been shifted towards baptism and had become the opening ritual of the rite of initiation. With Narsai we observe a further shift as the registration is not the first ritual anymore, but firmly embedded within the rite and preceded by the *apotaxis*, Lawsuit, and *syntaxis*.[73] As a

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67   22,363:30–31; *s* :17.

68   22,363:32; *s* :18.

69   22,363:34–36. Additions between brackets are Connolly's.

70   I follow here Connolly, 40n1, who proposes to read ܬܠܡ ('to mark', 'to imprint'; cf. Payne Smith, 166b) instead of ܬܒܥ (text; 'to demand', 'to exact'; cf. Payne Smith, 603b). ܬܒܥ is clearly inconsistent with the context and probably a scribal error.

71   22,363:37–39; *s* :21–22.

72   22,363:32–34; *s* :18–19.

73   Meyers, "Structure," 33 suggests that this further shift was the result of the decline of the adult catechumenate and the rise of infant baptism during the fourth and fifth centuries. This hypothesis does not seem to hold for the East Syrian church, however. There is no doubt that Narsai's rite still has mainly, if not exclusively, adult converts in view. It was not Narsai's rite but later developments that were responsible for the adaptation of the rite to infant baptism, resulting in the present *Ordo*. Traditionally, this transformation is attributed to the reforms of Ishoyāb III (580–658). However, since later commentaries up

consequence, the administrative function of the enrolment as a registration for baptism, based upon a positive outcome of the inquiery after the candidate's intentions and behaviour, has been lost. The ritual, including the declaration of the sponsor, has become fully ceremonial here. This may also be the reason why the registration of the sponsor's name is lacking.

Obviously, Narsai considers the courtroom setting of the preceding Lawsuit as the larger context of the ritual, since it is said that the candidate brings his sponsor "with him into the court (ܠܕܝܢܐ ܥܡܗ)".[74] The sponsor, then, seems to fulfil the role of a witness in court.

To sum up, the position as well as the actual performance makes me conclude that we do not have a real baptismal examination here, but a ceremony where the sponsor is expected to give only a positive testimony of the novice, as the ritual demands. This is not not to deny the solemnity of the things said; the ceremony reveals that the preparation and intentions of the baptizand are of the utmost importance. Because of this, it does not seem probable that candidates were admitted to initiation without first having been submitted to any serious baptismal inquiery. In fact, it seems likely that the ritual under consideration is a ceremonial reflection and confirmation of such a preceding (official or unofficial) scrutiny.

Unlike Theodore, Narsai does not explicitly elaborate on the meaning of the registration. The only phrase that sheds some light on this issue is: "He calls (*or* reads) his name, and presents him before the guards (i.e. the priests), that they may name him heir, and son, and citizen."[75] Interestingly, this is the one and only place where Narsai expressly calls the baptizand an 'heir', a 'son', or a 'citizen'. What is more, the whole idea of the candidate being or becoming an heir, a son, or a citizen seems absent from Narsai's liturgical homilies, while the three are common themes of Theodore's mystagogy. Do we then have here an isolated phrase in Narsai's account that has been incorporated due to Theodore's influence? We will take up this issue below.

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to the 14th century still suggest the practice of adult baptism, it seems more likely that the present *Ordo* is the result of much later developments (Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 74; see also his "Sin and the Devil," 68; cf. Diettrich, *Nestorianische Taufliturgie*). Concerning the present *Ordo*, Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 74 has rightly observed that "[t]he first striking difference between this rite and that presupposed by Narsai is that there is no ritualized renunciation of Satan and the devil [*sic*], and no exorcisms. This should not be interpreted as some semi-Pelagian interest, since the rite certainly does not jettison the idea of sin. Rather it seems to have been a practical response to infant baptism."

74   22,363:28; *s* :16.

75   22,363:34–36. Additions between brackets are Connolly's.

3.3   The Rituals Contextualised

The rites of Theodore and Narsai both witness a ritual during which the candidate is assisted by a sponsor, followed by an enrolment. Sponsorship has an early attestation and is already found in Tertullian.[76] The *Apostolic Tradition* probably contains the earliest description of the role of the sponsor during the examination of baptismal candidates:

> And when those appointed to receive baptism are chosen, their life having been examined (if they lived virtuously while they were catechumens, and if they honoured the widows, and if they visited those who are sick, and if they fulfilled every good work), and when those who brought them in testify in his behalf that he acted thus, then let them hear the gospel.[77]

The other early witnesses of sponsorship concerning baptismal candidates are the *Testamentum Domini*,[78] John Chrysostom,[79] Egeria's *Itinerarium*,[80] and

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76   *On Baptism* 18.4 (ed. and tr. Evans, *Baptism*, 38–39). Dujarier, "Sponsorship," 47 remarks that sponsorship "contrary to what one might think, did not originate in the customs surrounding infant baptism, but rather in those of the preparation of adults for baptism … Sponsors were originally those convinced Christians of the early centuries who persuaded their friends or colleagues to be converted, and who, after they had brought them to the catechumenate, continued to lend them brotherly assistance until they were fully initiated. Far from being the latest arrivals on the scene, they were the first movers in the process of conversion and their function remained of primordial importance, even during the catechesis." And in his *Parrainage*, 377, Dujarier contends that "le parrainage n'est pas né du catéchuménat; c'est le catéchuménat qui est né du parrainage, par suite d'une différenciation progressive des trois fonctions que ce dernier assumait primitivement, fonctions d'évangélisation, d'éducation et de sacramentalisation" (cf. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, 83 ff.).

77   20.1–2 (according to the Sahidic, the oldest extant version of these verses); tr. Bradshaw, Johnson & Philips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 104. In fact, this is the second examination. The first concerns admittance into the catechumenate during which the sponsor has a similar responsibility of testifying of the candidate's behaviour (15.1–2; tr. Bradshaw, Johnson & Philips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 82).

78   *TD* II.6; ed. Rahmani, 118, line 21–120, line 2; tr. Sperry-White, 24. The *Testamentum* is dependent of the *Apostolic Tradition*. Another document dependent of the *Apostolic Tradition*, among others, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, does only have the first examination for admittance into the catechumenate (*AC* VIII,32; Metzger, III, 234, 236, 238, 240; tr. *ANF* 7, 494–495), but not the second baptismal examination.

79   *Stav.* 2.15–16; ed. Kaczynski, II, 344, 346; tr. Harkins, 48–49. Chrysostom calls the sponsors 'spiritual fathers' (πατέρας … πνευματικούς; ed. Kaczynski, II, 346).

80   *It.* 45.1–4; Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 294, 296; tr. Wilkinson, 161–162.

AR.[81] Concerning the *Testamentum Domini*[82] and Egeria's *Itinerarium*,[83] it is clear that the sponsor acted as the candidate's guarantor within the context of a baptismal examination. Chrysostom does not mention an examination, but it is reasonable to suppose such a context since the sponsor is expected to warrant the catechumen's behaviour.[84] *AR*, however, mentions only that the sponsor is an 'instructor' (ܡܠܦܢܐ) and a 'guide' (ܗܕܝܐ).[85]

The earliest testimonies of formal enrolment date from the fourth century.[86] Aside from Theodore, our first lucid Syro-Palestine witnesses of formal enrolment, that antedate Narsai, are Egeria's *Itinerarium*[87] and Cyril of Jerusalem's *Procatechesis*.[88] However, the concept of a heavenly enrolment is much older and is already attested by Clement of Alexandria.[89] Also the fourth-/fifth-century Syriac *Acts of John* witnesses the idea of an enrolment in heaven by baptism, without any sign of a formal enrolment.[90] And it is worth noting here that any mention of or allusion to 'enrolment' in Chrysostom's *Baptismal Catecheses* may satisfactorily be interpreted as a reference to a heavenly enrolment by baptism and does not necessarily allude to a formal enrolment.[91] Though it

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81   *AR* 5; Brock, "Commentaries," 34–35.

82   "Let every one chosen to receive the bath first be tried and investigated, [as to] how they conducted themselves while catechumens: if they honoured the widows, if they visited the sick, if they walked in all humility and love, if they were diligent in good works. But let them be approved by the testimony from those who bring them" (11.6; ed. Rahmani, 118, lines 21–120, line 2; tr. Sperry-White, 24).

83   See quote below.

84   *Stav.* 2.15–16; ed. Kaczynski, II, 344; tr. Harkins, 48–49. Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 57.

85   *AR* 5; Brock, "Commentaries," 34.

86   The sudden appearance of formal enrolment in the fourth century in different geographical areas (cf. Dujarier, *Catechumenate*, 82–83), may be related to the growing tendency to baptise at Easter, combined with the introduction of Lent as the period of preparation. We may conjecture that, in order to sharpen the distinction between common catechumens—many of which did not have any intention to be baptised at all (cf. Dujarier, *Catechumenate*, 79 ff.)—and baptismal candidates, formal enrolment was introduced (cf. Dujarier, *Catechumenate*, 98), in fact a ritualisation of the already existent concept of a heavenly registration.

87   See quote below.

88   1, 4, and 13; ed. Cross, 1, 2–3, 8.

89   *Exhortation to the Greeks*, 9; ed. Butterworth, "Exhortation to the Greeks," 184; tr. Wilson, *Clement of Alexandria*, 80–81.

90   When the apostle has baptised the procurator (by three immersions), clothed him in white garments and given him the kiss of peace, he says to him: "Peace be unto thee, thou new bridegroom, who hadst grown old and effete in sin, and lo, to-day art become a youth, and thy name has been written in Heaven." (Wright, II, 40–41).

91   In *Stav.* 1.1 he says: "To call what takes place today a marriage would be no blunder; not only could we call it a marriage but even a marvellous and most unusual kind of military

is generally assumed that his rite contained a formal enrolment,[92] Chrysostom nowhere describes this particular ritual.

Albeit that a baptismal examination, sponsorship, and formal enrolment are attested by several sources, the combination of the three is rare in early (descriptions of the) rites. In fact, the only other certain witness to this triple practice, besides Theodore and Narsai, is Egeria's *Itinerarium*:

> I feel I should add something about the way they instruct those who are to be baptized at Easter. Names must be given in before the first day of Lent, which means that a presbyter takes down all the names before the start of the eight weeks for which Lent lasts here, as I have told you. Once the priest has all the names, on the second day of Lent at the start of the eight weeks, the bishop's chair is placed in the middle of the Great Church, the Martyrium, the presbyters sit in chairs on either side of him, and all the clergy stand. Then one by one those seeking baptism are brought up, men coming with their fathers (*cum patribus suis*) and women with their mothers (*cum matribus suis*). As they come in one by one, the bishop asks their neighbours (*vicinos*) questions about them: 'Is this person leading a

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enlistment" (tr. Harkins, 23). This 'military enlistment' probably refers to an enrolment (Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 51). Since the series of Chrysostom's instructions started thirty days before baptism and was preceded by formal enrolment, which begun forty days before baptism and probably lasted for ten days, this 'military enlistment' must be something different from formal enrolment, especially since Chrysostom explicitly mentions that it "takes place today". In 1.2 it is said that the candidates are "earnestly desiring to be enrolled in the flock of Christ" (tr. Harkins, 23). Again, this 'enrolment' is still future and does not refer to the past formal enrolment but to the benefits of baptism. Next, in 2.29 the neophytes are addressed thus: "He has enrolled you in the front ranks of His friends …". The context, however, is clearly post-baptismal ("as you come up from the waters …") and this 'enrolment' also refers to the benefits of baptism. The same is true for the fourth instruction which was delivered after baptism (cf. Harkins, 243–244n1), wherein Chrysostom remarks that the newly baptized are "inscribed on the citizen lists of heaven" (4.6; tr. Harkins, 68) and "enrolled in this assembly" (4.24; tr. Harkins, 75). In 7.12 Chrysostom again speaks of an enrolment in heaven without any reference to a formal enrolment (cf. *PK* 1.2). The only phrase which may refer to a formal enrolment is *Stav.* 2.9: "All of you then, who have deserved to be enrolled in this heavenly book …" (Πάντες τοίνυν ὅσοι κατηξιώθητε ἐγγραφῆναι τῇ ἐπουρανίῳ βίβλιῳ; ed. Kaczynski, II, 338; tr. Harkins, 46; see also 216n17 where Harkins contends that this phrase "very likely refers to the catechumen's enrolment in the register of the Church."). Yet, the exact wording also allows to see the enrolment as still future from the moment of speaking. (For a discussion of the meaning of enrolment in Chrysostom's instructions, see Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 50–54.)

92   Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 50.

good life? Does he respect his parents? Is he a drunkard or a boaster?' He asks about all the serious human vices. And if his inquiries show him that someone has not committed any of these misdeeds, he himself puts down his name; but if someone is guilty he is told to go away, and the bishop tells him that he is to amend his ways before he may come to the font.[93]

The primary meaning of 'fathers' (*pateres*) and 'mothers' (*materes*) is probably that of 'spiritual parents'.[94] These 'fathers' and 'mothers' were responsible for the spiritual formation and guidance of the candidate up to the baptismal font; they accompanied the *competentes* during instruction and the recitation of the Creed.[95] It is commonly assumed that the 'neighbours' (*vicini*) are the members of the congregation directly standing next to the candidates and therefore have to be distinguished from the *pateres* and *materes*.[96] In that case, the sponsors introduce and accompany the *competentes*, yet the questioning is left to the 'neighbours'.[97] To sum up, the 'fathers' and 'mothers' have the responsibility of a father-guide,[98] but the role of witness-guarantor is reserved for the 'neighbours'. This implies an interesting and important difference from the sponsorship as described by Theodore and Narsai, where both the roles of father-guide and witness-guarantor are the responsibility of one and the same person.

This leaves Theodore and Narsai as the only explicit early witnesses of the trio examination-sponsorship-formal enrolment with the sponsor operating as

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93   *It.* 45.1–4; ed. Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 294, 296; tr. Wilkinson, 161–162. Additions in parenthesis are mine.

94   The identity of the *pateres* and *materes* has been much debated. For a helpful discussion, see Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, 98–101. Although the category of 'spiritual parents' might include natural parents, these relatives operated on behalf of the candidate as spiritual fathers and mothers and not in the first place because they were kinsmen. See Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, 101. Cf. Guchteneëre, *Parrainage*, 49.

95   See *It.* 46.1 and 46.5–6; ed. Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 296, 298, 300.

96   Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, 104; Guchteneëre, *Parrainage*, 49–51.

97   Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, 104: "… the sponsors were overshadowed by or probably absorbed into the larger group of 'neighbors' who answered questions about the candidates." Cf. Dujarier, *Parrainage* (55–56). According to Guchteneëre, *Parrainage*, 51, the sponsors have the function of mediators—they introduce the candidates to the bishop—and guides—they accompany the candidates, instruct them in the Christian life and assist them to memorise the symbol of faith; the 'neighbours' serve as witnesses of the candidates' preparation and guarantee that they are ready to receive baptism.

98   Egeria does not describe the mysteries themselves. Therefore, we remain ignorant "whether the fathers and mothers were present at the baptism or had any role in it" (Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, 104).

both father-guide and witness-guarantor. Moreover, Theodore's and Narsai's rites have in common that the enrolment is part of the baptismal rite and distinguish themselves from other sources which attest a registration of candidates at the beginning of Lent.[99] But before we can responsibly establish any influence of Theodore on Narsai here, we first have to submit both rituals to a close comparison.

3.4   The Rituals Compared

When we compare the different patterns witnessed by Theodore, Narsai, and *AR*—which Narsai probably knew and made use of[100]—, it becomes clear that Narsai's pattern has much more in common with *AR* than with Theodore. The latter puts the trio examination-sponsorship-enrolment at the very beginning of the rite, preceding the Lawsuit (exorcism), confession and prayer, penitential prayer, *apotaxis/syntaxis* etc. In *AR*, which has no formal enrolment, the role of the sponsor as father-guide follows the renunciation of Satan, the confession of Christ and the exorcism, and precedes the one and only anointing. Narsai has the sequence of renunciation, Lawsuit ('exorcism'), confession, examination-sponsorship-enrolment, and anointing. Although the position of the 'exorcism' (Lawsuit) in *AR* and Narsai differs, in both rites the role of the sponsor follows the renunciation, confession, and 'exorcism' (Lawsuit), and precedes the anointing. In fact, *AR* and Narsai witness two variants of a similar pattern with Narsai having the more logical positioning of the Lawsuit before the *syntaxis*. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that Narsai's rite is basically a remodelling of the pattern of *AR*.

It is noticeable that only Narsai and Theodore have the combination of a formal enrolment and the role of the sponsor as both father-guide and witness-guarantor. In an effort to explain this similarity, we cannot ignore that the positions (and consequently, the functions) of these rituals in Theodore and Narsai differ markedly. As noted above, the pattern of Narsai's rite is closer to *AR* than to Theodore, which suggests that the structures of the rites of Narsai and Theodore are the result of different subtraditions. The pattern witnessed by Narsai, with an enrolment somewhere in the middle of the rite, is also found

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99   Later rites like the one described by Pseudo-Dionysius (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* II,2.5 ff.) and two anonymous rites C and D, partly dependent on Pseudo-Dionysius (Brock, "Commentaries," 35, 57–58), exhibit a similar shift of the enrolment towards baptism.
100   Brock, "Commentaries," 56–57.

in the somewhat later anonymous baptismal commentaries C and D,[101] which also share with Narsai the order *apotaxis*-exorcism-*syntaxis*. These rites witness a subtradition wherein former preliminary acts like the enrolment and exorcisms where becoming part of the initiation rite itself, a process of which Theodore's rite may reflect one of its earliest stages. So, it seems likely that the enrolment and sponsor (as witness guarantor) in Narsai were already part of the tradition and that the current position of these rituals is the result of the abovementioned process. Is the mention of enrolment combined with the double function of the sponsor in Theodore and Narsai a mere coincidence, then? Not necessarily. One must note that, unlike the function of the sponsor as witness-guarantor and the enrolment, the role of the sponsor as father-guide is not related to a specific ritual. Narsai just informs us about this additional responsibility of the sponsor and it is possible that Theodore's description of the sponsor inspired him to do so. We must bear in mind, however, that Narsai was probably not unfamiliar with the notion of the sponsor as guide as such, since the very idea and even the term 'guide' (ܡܕܒܪܢܐ /ܡܕܒܪܐ) are also found in *AR* 5 (see below).

The different position of the enrolment in the rites of Narsai and Theodore necessarily entails a change of function. Although Theodore's enrolment is much more than a formal registration for baptism, this function is still implied. The general framework still has the character of an examination. In Narsai's rite, the features of an examination have been reduced and the ritual mainly functions as a declaratory confirmation of a (conjectured) preceding baptismal examination. Furthermore, as it stands, the enrolment cannot possibly function as an official registration *for* baptism. Besides the registration in the books itself, the enrolment has completely lost its administrative property to the benefit of its spiritual meaning. With other words, it has been developed from a formal enrolment into a symbolic act. The absence of the registration of the sponsor's name may reinforce this idea.

Narsai's enrolment has not only a different position and function, but also a different relation with the larger context of the rite. For Theodore, enrolment is also a process, which starts with formal enrolment and comes to fulfilment by the reception of the *orarium*, the sign of freedom. This whole phenomenon of enrolment as a process, guided by Theodore's citizen/citizenship typology, is completely absent in Narsai's rite.

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101   Ibid., 34–37. Both C and D used and, therefore, post-date Pseudo-Dionysius. Both commentaries are also familiar with *AR*, and D seems also dependent on C (ibid., 57–58).

The general course of the ritual itself is quite similar in both rites. The sponsor vouches for the sincerity of the candidate, resulting in the enrolment. A (minor) difference pertains to the bodily position of the initiand: Theodore's baptizand is standing, while Narsai's is probably kneeling during the ritual. And while Narsai's candidate solemnly declares that he will remain in the truth, it remains unclear whether Theodore's candidate is actively involved in the examination or not.

As we have ascertained in both the rituals of Theodore and Narsai, the sponsor has the dual responsibility of witness-guarantor and father-guide. As a witness-guarantor, Narsai's sponsor has the duty to "bear witness to his preparation and his sincerity" (ܢܣܗܕ ܥܠ ܬܘܩܢܗ ܘܥܠ ܫܪܝܪܘܬܗ).[102] In like manner, Theodore's sponsor "testifies for him to the effect that he is worthy of the city and of its citizenship"[103] and "bears witness to what the catechumen[104] has done and to the fact that he has prepared himself in the past to be worthy of the city and of its citizenship".[105] The duty of the sponsor as father-guide concerning the candidate is, according to Narsai, that "[h]e becomes as a guide to his words and his actions; and he shews him the conduct of spiritual life".[106] Theodore tells the baptizand that the sponsor is "a witness" (ܣܗܕܐ) and also "a guide of that city and its way of life" (ܡܕܒܪܢܐ ܕܗܝ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܘܗܘܦܟܐ ܕܒܗ)[107] and that it is his responsibility "to teach you, who are a stranger and a newcomer to that great city, all the things that pertain to it and to its citizenship".[108]

Although the description of sponsorship in both rites is similar, the level of verbatim agreement is low. In fact, the only words they have in common are 'sponsor' (ܥܪ̈ܒܐ), 'guide' (ܡܕܒܪܢܐ), and 'conduct/way of life' (ܗܘܦܟܐ). As we have seen, ܗܘܦܟܐ is an important term for Theodore[109] and it is possible, there-

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102   22,363:29–30; *s* :16–17.

103   ܘܩܕܡ ܕܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܘܥܠܬܐ ܕܗܢ ܠܗ ܟܫܦ ܗܘ ܡܟܫܪ ... ܘܗܠܝܢ, ܡܣܗܕ ܗܠܝܢ. 1,25:12–13 (1,14); *s* 1,153:10–11.

104   ܗܘ ܩܪܒ. Lit. "he who approaches". Possibly "he who presents himself (as candidate)". Cf. *BS*: "der sich bewirbt" and *T&D*: "qui se présente".

105   ܘܣܗܕ ܥܡ ܩܕܡ ܥܠ ܗܘ ܗܘ ܕܩܕܡ ܥܠ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܣܥܪ: ܘܗܕܐ ܕܩܕܡ ܢܦܫܗ ܐܛܝܒ ܒܙܒܢ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܘܩܕܡ ܫܘܐ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܘܠܒܢܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܗ. 1,25:19–22 (1,15); *s* 1,153:16–18.

106   ܐܝܟ ܡܕܒܪܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܡܠܘܗܝ, ܘܠܣܘܥܪܢܘܗܝ, ܘܡܚܘܐ ܠܗ ܕܘܒܪܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܪܘܚ. 22,363:32–34; *s* :18–19.

107   Own translation, see p. 103; *s* 1,154:24–155:1; cf. Mingana 1,26:19–20 (1,16).

108   ܕܬܐܠܦܝܘܗܝ ܠܗܢ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܢܘܟܪܝܐ ܘܚܕܬܐ ܠܗܝ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ: ܟܠܗܝܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܥܕܢ ܠܗ ܘܠܒܢܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܗ. 1,26:23–25 (1,16); *s* 1,155:3–4.

109   See n27 above.

fore, that Narsai is indebted to Theodore here. If so, it is important to note that Narsai did not borrow the idea of citizenship at this point. Narsai's norm is not the 'conduct of the city', but the 'conduct of the heavenly life'.

The other two, ܚܬܳܬܳܐ and ܐܘܕܝ, are employed by Theodore in the same section as ܐܒܘܪ, even in the same phrase.[110] Both ܚܬܳܬܳܐ and ܐܘܕܝ are also present in *AR*, however, where they occur in the same sentence.[111] So, if Narsai has borrowed these terms, Theodore and *AR* seem to have equal chances being the source. And maybe it was their occurrence in both sources which resulted in Narsai using them (consciously or unconsciously).

A notable difference concerning the time frame of the sponsor's duty to act as the candidate's guide is a consequence of the different positions of the enrolment in both rites. In Theodore, the enrolment occurs only a few days before the Easter Vigil.[112] At the same time we had good reasons to conclude that the official duties of the sponsor ceased with the spreading of the *orarium*.[113] Narsai's sponsor, however, seems only 'installed' as guide somewhere in the middle of the rite, which will be over within an hour.[114] Therefore—if his duty as guide means more than mere words ("he becomes … he shews")—the sponsor must of necessity take this responsibility (for an undefined period) after initiation.

We have already noticed above that the sponsor's plea, just preceding the enrolment, for calling the candidate "heir, and son, and citizen", seems an isolated phrase in Narsai's exposé on the baptismal rite. Nowhere else in his discussion does Narsai even allude to the idea of the novice becoming an 'heir', 'son', or 'citizen'. At the same time, the baptizand as 'heir', 'son', and 'citizen' are prominent ideas in Theodore's homilies. The idea of the candidate as an 'heir' is always combined with 'citizen(ship)',[115] although the exact words 'citizen' and 'heir' appear in the same phrase only once (italics mine):

> As long as you are mortal by nature you are not able to enter the abode of heaven, but after you have cast away such a nature in baptism and have risen also with Christ through baptism, and received the symbol

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110   *S* 1,154:21–155:1.

111   *AR* 5: ܚܙܐ ܐܢ ܡܠܟܐ ܗܘ ܡܩܒܠ ܘܐܬܒ ܠܘܬܗ ܘܡܩܪܒ ܠܗ ܐܝܩܪܐ ܕܒܝܪܐ (Brock, "Commentaries," 34).

112   See p. 18.

113   See p. 107.

114   See 21,341:24–25; *S* :16 where Narsai says: "It is altogether a new thing, and great is the lesson given therein, that within an hour (ܒܚܕܐ ܫܥܐ) should be accomplished the period of conception and birth."

115   1,20:34–21:2 (1,5); 2,43:19–20 (2,12); 2,44:26–32 (2,14); 2,45:14 (2,15).

of the new birth which we are expecting, you will be seen as a *citizen* of heaven (ܒܪ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ) and an *heir* of the Kingdom of Heaven (ܒܪ ܝܪܬܘܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ).[116]

As will be discussed more elaborately below,[117] filial adoption also is an important concept of Theodore's baptismal theology.[118] Therefore, an indebtedness of Narsai to Theodore concerning the concepts of 'heir', 'son', and 'citizen' seems easily established here. Yet, the following critical observations prevent us from making an hasty conclusion.

Let us first concentrate on the terms 'heir' and 'son'. It is worth noting that in Theodore's homilies the idea of the novice as an 'heir' refers either to baptism,[119] or to the full realisation at the resurrection,[120] but is never joined with formal enrolment, which is exclusively connected with the idea of 'citizen(ship)'. The same holds for Pauline adoptive sonship; this concept also relates to baptism or to the resurrection, but is never associated with formal enrolment in Theodore. So, if Narsai is indebted to Theodore here—which remains to be seen—he certainly has creatively disconnected these terms from their original context and embedded them into a new framework.

Furthermore, as I contend in my paper "Critical Comparison",[121] Narsai applies the Parable of the Prodigal Son as a baptismal narrative, and there are strong interpretational ties between Narsai's *Liturgical Homilies* and his homily entitled *Parable of the Prodigal Son*. It is noteworthy here that in the latter, 'heir' and 'son' are important conceptions with reference to the younger son.[122] In fact, it is especially his position as 'heir and son' that is at stake. As a son he claims and dispenses with his inheritance, and by his return and repentance he is reinstalled as an heir and a son.[123] Since Narsai himself interprets baptism as the enactment of the parable of the younger son, whose return is a

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116   2,44:26–32 (2,14); *s* 2,175:6–11.

117   See p. 311 ff.

118   Cf. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 70–71.

119   See I,21:1 (I,5); 2,43:20 (2,12); 2,44:31 (2,14).

120   2,45:14 (2,15).

121   538–540.

122   Siman, "Enfant prodigue." For 'son', see the verses 5, 68, 96, 108, 114, 134, 168, 185. For 'heir', see the verses 6, 111, 114, 132, 185, 204. The application of the parable of the prodigal son to baptism is already found in Tertullian, *On Modesty* 9 (ed. Micaelli & Munier, *Pudicité*, 193–195; tr. Le Saint, *Purity*, 76–79) and also attested by Augustine (*Sermon* 216.11; ed. Migne, *PL* 38:1076–1082; tr. Hill, *Sermons*, 173–174).

123   See especially the verses 5, 6, and 114.

type of the sinner coming home by conversion and baptism,[124] it seems acceptable to suppose the concepts 'heir' and 'son' having their origin in Narsai's own interpretation of the parable.[125] This is sustained by three additional observations. Firstly, For Theodore, it is not 'sonship' as such that matters, but 'adoption of sons'; nowhere is the neophyte called just 'son'. And although Narsai's 'son' could refer to adoption, it is not necessarily so. It is impossible that Narsai would have missed Theodore's concept of adoption and it is therefore noticeable that he calls the candidate 'son', but does not speak of 'adoption'. If 'son' is meant to refer to 'adoption of sons', Narsai has used a term alien to Theodore's vocabulary and in a very ineffective way. The more attractive alternative is that Narsai deliberately avoids speaking of 'adoption of sons' as he does not want to communicate such an idea at all and that 'son' is better understood within the conceptual framework of Narsai's mystagogy, that is, the parable of the prodigal son. Such implies that, like the younger son, the sinner is not adopted but reinstalled as a son, a position formerly lost but now regained by baptism.[126] Secondly, not only are 'heir' and 'son' important concepts in Narsai's exposition of the parable of the prodigal son, this homily also contains the exact phrase 'heir and son' (ܝܪܬܐ ܘܒܪܐ)[127] as pronounced by the sponsor. Theodore also uses 'heir' (ܝܪܬܐ), yet, as mentioned before, he does not apply 'son' (ܒܪܐ) to the novice and, by consequence, the phrase 'heir and son' (ܝܪܬܐ ܘܒܪܐ) is lacking. As Theodore, instead, combines 'heir' with 'citizen', the specific order

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124   22,362:21–29; 21,347:29–348:7.

125   This argument seems strongest if the homily on the parable of the prodigal son antedates the *Liturgical Homilies*. However, even if the *Liturgical Homilies* antedate the homily on the parable, it is apparent from the former that the interpretation of the parable as such is already existent. Furthermore, the discussion of the parable shows that Narsai considers 'heir' and 'son' as adequate titles for the younger son, while the whole idea of 'citizenship' is completely lacking. So, if the homily on the parable is of a later date, it still needs explanation why the concepts of 'heir' and 'son' are taken over, while the younger son is never referred to as 'citizen'. The only reasonable explanation seems to be that both 'heir' and 'son' are strongly embedded in Narsai's own creative exegesis of the parable, which is attested in the *Liturgical Homilies* as well as in the homily on the parable of the prodigal son.

126   Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 38 remarks that it "is remarkable that Narsai has no mention of 'sonship' in his two homilies." Besides the passage under consideration where the baptizand is called 'son', this observation is right. The reason for this absence remains a matter of speculation. It might be that Narsai wanted to avoid any link with adoptive sonship, but, if so, why then did he use 'son' once instead of evading the term altogether? We could also conjecture that Narsai did not consider it necessary to explicitly speak of 'sonship' as the very idea is implied with his baptismal narrative of the prodigal son.

127   Verse 114.

of 'heir, son and citizen' in Narsai's phrase may have significance and confirm that the ideas of 'heir' and 'son' are more closely related than 'heir' and 'citizen', which is in harmony with my earlier suggestion that 'heir' and 'son' belong together and stem from Narsai's own exegesis of the parable of the prodigal son. Thirdly, right after the phrase "that they may name him heir, and son, and citizen" Narsai continues: "In the books the priest enters the name of the lost one".[128] The term 'lost one' (ܐܒܝܕܐ) is not used by Theodore in the context of the enrolment. However, in his homily on the parable of the prodigal son Narsai employs the substantive twice in the same way to denote the younger son.[129] It seems that we have yet another example here of Narsai's indebtedness to his own repertoire.

To sum up, there are good reasons to suppose that the concepts of 'heir' and 'son' have been derived from Narsai's own creative interpretation of the parable of the prodigal son, instead of being borrowed from Theodore. Of course, reading Theodore could have triggered him to use these concepts already available and applicable within their own frame of reference. Yet, to suppose a full indebtedness to Theodore here is both unnecessary and unwarranted.

Let us finally have a look at the term 'citizen' and the related concept of citizenship. Since the whole idea of citizenship seems lacking in both Narsai's liturgical homilies and his homily on the parable of the prodigal son, it is possible that he is indebted to Theodore here. Yet, it must be hastily added that Theodore uses[130] ܒܪ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ while Narsai speaks of ܒܪ ܡܠܟܘܬܐ.[131]

Although both terms have the meaning of 'citizen' and may be seen as synonyms, we cannot ignore the fact that they are not identical.[132] If we assume that the only Syriac copy of Theodore's homilies we possess faithfully reflects the one Narsai had at his disposal, he deliberately altered ܒܪ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ into ܒܪ ܡܠܟܘܬܐ.[133] The reason for this adaptation might be that Narsai wanted to avoid the connection between 'citizen' and 'city', the latter idea of which is completely lacking in Narsai's baptismal theology, while 'Kingdom' (ܡܠܟܘܬܐ)

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128   22,363:37; S :21.

129   Siman, "Enfant prodigue," verses 101 and 169. The same passive participle is also used in the biblical narrative, see Luke 15:24, 32 (in all Syriac versions, see Kiraz, *Syriac Gospels*, 319). Yet, Narsai uses the participle as a substantive, whereas in Luke the participle is employed as a predicate.

130   S 1,152:23.

131   S 22,363:21.

132   Guillaumont, 201 renders Narsai's ܒܪ ܡܠܟܘܬܐ with "membre du Royaume".

133   Since both terms are similar and have four syllables, this alteration cannot be explained by Narsai's endeavour to let it fit his twelve syllable pattern.

and God as 'King' (ܡܠܟܐ) are common concepts of his mystagogy.[134] Narsai's 'citizen' is not a member of the city, but a member of the Kingdom.[135]

3.5 Conclusion

The general pattern of Narsai's rite is strikingly different from Theodore's and, therefore, any influence of the latter on the former in this respect is out of the question. Instead, Narsai's rite may be seen as a remodelling of *AR*, both of which may be seen as variants on a similar pattern.

Yet, similar to Theodore, but unlike *AR*, Narsai combines the idea of the sponsor as guide with the ritual of an enrolment and the sponsor as witness-guarantor. Although the similarity is noteworthy, it it not necessary to attribute this to a direct influence of Theodore. It seems more likely that the presence as well as the position of these rituals in Narsai is the result of a process whereby former preliminary acts became integrated into the baptismal rite itself. Moreover, the different position of this cluster of rituals in both rites inevitably brings with it a different function of the enrolment and the role of the sponsor as witness-guarantor. The administrative function of the enrolment, still present in Theodore, has been completely spiritualised in Narsai. Furthermore, Theodore's portrayal of enrolment as a process, guided by his idea of citizenship, is fully absent in Narsai, probably because his enrolment is not put at the beginning of the rite. And as for the role of the sponsor as father-guide, in Theodore this responsibility seems fulfilled after the spreading of the *orarium*, while in Narsai it seems that the sponsor is only able to fulfil this task after initiation.

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134   For ܡܠܟܘܬܐ, see 22,358:34 (*s* :21); 22,358:35 (*s* :22); 22,361:32 (*s* :21); 21,347:2 (*s* :1); 21,347:10 (*s* :6); 21,354:13–14 (*s* :8); 21,355:13–14 (*s* :7); 22,367:15 (*s* :9). For God/Christ as ܡܠܟܐ, see 22,358:37 (*s* :23); 22,361:33 (*s* 361:21–362:1); 22,362:2 (*s* :2); 22,362:9 (*s* :6); 22,362:10 (*s* :7); 22,362:9–10 (*s* :6); 22,362:37 (*s* :23); 22,363:1–2 (*s* 362:24); 22,363:13 (*s* :7); 22,363:38–39 (*s* :22); 22,366:30 (*s* :18); 22,366:34 (*s* :20–21); 22,367:7 (*s* :4); 22,367:17 (*s* :10); 22,367:23 (*s* :13); 21,344:18 (*s* :11); 21,349:21 (*s* :12); 21,350:13 (*s* :9); 21,350:21 (*s* :14); 21,350:24 (*s* :16); 21,350:26 (*s* :18); 21,354:33 (*s* :18); 21,354:35 (*s* :19); 21,354:40 (*s* :22); 21,355:11 (*s* :6–7).

135   It is interesting to note that in his homily on the parable of the prodigal son also, Narsai ignores the fact that the enemy of the younger son, who sent him to the swine, was a 'citizen', (Siman, "Enfant prodigue," verses 26–29; 53–58; 64–70; 86; 137) while the biblical text clearly says so (ܚܕ ܡܢ ܒܢܝ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ; Luke 15:15). We may conjecture here that, while not taking over Theodore's 'city typology', Narsai nevertheless tries to avoid a view clearly opposing the one of his revered teacher. Such would have been the case if Narsai should have developed the potential negative connotation of the citizenship of the enemy.

It is also notable that citizenship and filial adoption, two prominent ideas in Theodore, are lacking in Narsai. Narsai especially seems to avoid Theodore's concept of the Church or heaven as 'city'. Although he employs the term 'citizen', the Syriac indicates that this is not a 'son of the city', but a 'son of the Kingdom'. This 'heir and son'—a concept derived from Narsai's own repertoire—is not an adopted son as in Theodore, but a restored natural child.

To sum up, the position, function, and meaning of enrolment and sponsorship in Narsai shows the influence of at least two forces: a particular (East Syrian) tradition shared with *AR*, and Narsai's own creativity. It is not necessary or even desirable to postulate a heavy dependence on Theodore. Narsai is not a naïve copyist, but a creative thinker, critically drawing from different sources.

Deliverance from Sin and the Devil

4.1 Theodore of Mopsuestia

4.1.1 *Description and Discussion of the Ritual*

After formal enrolment, the baptizand experiences a ritual which Theodore calls both a 'Lawsuit' (ܕܝܢܐ) and a 'ceremony of exorcism' (ܡܘܡܬܐ):[1]

> Because you are unable by yourselves to plead against Satan and to fight against him, the services of the persons called exorcists (ܡܘܡܝܢܐ) have been found indispensable, as they act as your surety for Divine help. They ask in a loud and prolonged voice that our enemy should be punished and by a verdict from the judge be ordered to retire and stand far, so that no room and no entry of any kind might be left to him from which to inflict harm on us, and so that we might be delivered for ever from his servitude, and allowed to live in perfect freedom, and enjoy the happiness of our present enrolment.[2]
>
> In this same way when the words called the words of exorcism are pronounced you stand perfectly quiet ...[3] You stand, therefore, with out-stretched arms in the posture of one who prays, and look downwards and remain in that state in order to move the judge to mercy. And you take off your outer garment and stand barefooted ...[4]
>
> You stand also on garments of sackcloth so that from the fact that your feet are pricked and stung by the roughness of the cloth ...[5]
>
> When ... the judgment and fight with the Demon ... are at an end; and when by God's decision the Tyrant has submitted and yielded to the shouts of the exorcist (ܡܘܡܝܢܐ) and been condemned ... you are brought by duly appointed persons to the priest, as it is before him that you have to make your engagements and promises to God.[6]

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1 2,35:6 (2,1); *S* 2,164:14.

2 1,31:3–12 (1,22); *S* 1,159:21–160:2.

3 1,31:25–26 (1,23); *S* 1,160:10–12.

4 1,31:35–38 (1,24); *S* 1,160:18–21.

5 1,32:12–14 (1,25); *S* 1,161:3–4.

6 1,33:3–14 (1,26); *S* 161:23–162:6.

This ritual is performed by so-called "exorcists" (ܡܘܡܝܢܐ).[7] The individual exorcist, however, is called "advocate" (ܣܢܓܪܐ),[8] which confirms that Theodore interprets the 'exorcism' as a courtroom scene.[9] The plural ܡܘܡܝܢܐ and the phrases "as they act as … surety" (ܡܥܪܒܝܢ)[10] and "[t]hey ask" (ܫܐܠܝܢ)[11] indicate that multiple exorcists were involved in the ritual. One must note, however, that Theodore addresses the collective of initiands here as is indicated by the phrases "Because you are unable by yourselves to plead against Satan"[12] and "as they act as your surety" (ܡܥܪܒܝܢ ܠܟܘܢ).[13] Yet, concerning the singular ܣܢܓܪܐ the directly following phrases "you are brought" (ܡܬܩܪܒ)[14] and "you have to … make" (ܗܘ ܠܟ … ܠܡܥܒܕ)[15] indicate that the individual candidate is addressed. We may be quite sure, then, that each candidate was exorcised by a single exorcist and that there were multiple exorcists because there were multiple candidates, who were exorcised simultaneously.

Since there were multiple exorcists involved and Theodore explicitly mentions that the candidates were brought to the bishop only after the Lawsuit, this ritual cannot have been performed by the pontiff himself.[16] But who were those 'exorcists' (ܡܘܡܝܢܐ)? Did they constitute a special *ordo* and, if so, were they part of the clergy or not? Originally, all Christians could practice exorcism and this situation continued well into the third century.[17] Writers like Tertullian, Cyprian, Minutius Felix and Origen testify that all Christians could cast out demons.[18] Yet, from the mid-third century onwards we observe an increasing institutionalisation, restricting the praxis more and more to a class

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7   *S* 1,159:23.

8   1,33:8 (1,26); *S* 1,162:1. Mingana translates, somewhat freely, with "exorcist" here, while *T&D* and *BS* translate more literally with "avocat" and "Anwalt". Cf. 1,31:20 (1,23); *S* 1,160:8.

9   See p. 140 ff.

10   *S* 1,159:23.

11   *S* 1,159:24.

12   (*S* ܕܬܠܘ ܡܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܕܬܬܚܫܒܘܢ ܘܬܥܒܕܘܢ ܡܠܐܟܐ ܣܛܢܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܝܬ
        1,159:21–22).

13   1,159:23.

14   1,33:12 (1,26); *S* 1,162:5.

15   1,33:13 (1,26); *S* 1,162:5.

16   This praxis is different therefore from the ones attested by the *Apostolic Tradition* and the *Testamentum Domini* which both mention that the candidates were daily exorcised—without specifying by whom—and that the final exorcism was performed by the bishop himself.

17   Neveut, "Notes sur la liturgie," 158–159; Guiley, *Demons and Demonology*, 76; Twelftree, *Name of Jesus*, 262; Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 306; Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 16. Cf. Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 116–118.

18   Neveut, "Notes sur la liturgie," 158–159.

of (ordained) exorcists.[19] It may not be accidental that this process of clericalisation of the office of exorcist coincides with the rise of pre-baptismal exorcism during the same period.[20]

The canons of the councils of Antioch (341) and Laodicea (fourth cent.) seem to indicate that the ordination of exorcists was desirable.[21] It is worth noting that the ninety-seven bishops who attended the council of Antioch in 341 came from a wide region, mainly from Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Cilicia, Isauria, Cappadocia, Bithynia, and Thrace.[22] Therefore, whether Theodore wrote his catechetical lectures in Antioch, Mopsuestia, or Tarsus, it seems likely that he was acquainted with the praxis of ordaining exorcists.

The fourth-century documents of the baptismal liturgy yield a similar picture concerning the status of exorcists involved in pre-baptismal exorcisms. Cyril of Jerusalem mentions that the exorcisms are performed by 'exorcists' (τῶν ἐπορκιζόντων), without further identifying them.[23] Egeria, however, explicitly says that "those who are preparing for baptism during the season of the Lenten fast go to be exorcized by the clergy" (*a clericis exorcizentur*).[24] John Chrysostom describes 'the exorcists'[25] as "those appointed to this task" (οἱ εἰς τοῦτο τεταγμένοι).[26] According to Wenger, this being 'appointed' (τεταγμέ-

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19   *RAC*, s.v. "Exorzismus," 74–75; Neveut, "Notes sur la liturgie," 159–162; Guiley, *Demons and Demonology*, 76. The first reference to an order of exorcists is made by Cornelius, the bishop of Rome (251–253) in a letter to Fabius, the bishop of Antioch. (Eusebius, *C.H.* 6.43.11).

20   Cf. Neveut, "Notes sur la liturgie," 159; *CE*, s.v. "exorcist".

21   Landon, *Manual of Councils*, 34, 319. Cf. Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 117–118; Harkins, 219n28. Of course, we must be aware of the fact that these canons reflect the ideal, not necessarily everyday reality.

22   Landon, *Manual of Councils*, 31.

23   *Procat.* 9; ed. Cross, 6; tr. Yarnold, 82. The whole passage runs thus: "As goldsmiths achieve their effect by directing their breath into the fire through narrow pipes and blowing on the gold hidden in the retort and stimulating the flame underneath, so too the exorcists inspire fear through the Holy Spirit and, so to speak, rekindle the soul inside the retort of the body." Telfer, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 71n26 maintains that "[i]t is probable that the ministers of exorcism in this prebaptismal training were all persons inscribed, in some capacity, on the Canon of the Church; i.e. *canonici*, if not *clerici*", which matches the observation of Egeria (see directly below).

24   *It.* 46.1; ed. Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 296; tr. Wilkinson, 162.

25   τῶν ἐξορκιζόντων: *Stav.* 2.12, *PK* 1.11, *PK* 2.14; ed. Kaczynski, II, 342 (= 3/2,12), 160 (= 2/1,7), 210 (= 2/2,6); tr. Harkins, 47, 135, 154. τῶν ἐξορκιστῶν: *PK* 2.16; ed. Kaczynski, I, 212 (= 2/2,7); tr. Harkins, 154–155. οἱ δὲ ἐξορκίζοντες: *PK* 2.17; ed. Kaczynski, I, 214 (= 2/2,7); tr. Harkins, 155.

26   *Stav.* 2.12; ed. Kaczynski, II, 342 (= 3/2,12); tr. Harkins, 47.

voι) implies that the exorcists were ordained and constituted a distinct *ordo* (τάξις).[27] This viewpoint is sustained by Harkins who observes that the same verb (τέτακται) is used with reference to the bishop where "it definitely specifies one belonging to a τάξις or rank of the clergy" and conjectures that "it is not impossible that the same was true of the exorcists".[28] Likewise, Finn infers that the exorcists in Chrysostom's rite were clerics.[29] More recently, Kaczynski has contended that the exorcists in Antioch formed a distinct *ordo*.[30] It seems, then, that the exorcists performing the pre-baptismal exorcisms in the vicinity of Syro-Palestine formed a distinct order and were normally ordained clerics.

This view seems challenged, though, by the testimony of another witness from the area of Antioch, the *Apostolic Constitutions*:

> An exorcist is not ordained; the gift of healing is a grace of God, and is revealed by God; if an exorcist wishes to become a bishop, presbyter or deacon, he must be ordained as such.[31]

It is important to note, however, that the baptismal liturgy described by the *Apostolic Constitutions* does not include a pre-baptismal exorcism.[32] The above prescription, therefore, refers to the general praxis of exorcism and we may severely question whether this piece of information may inform us concerning the conditions to be met within the liturgical context of baptism.[33] Moreover, if there is any consistency in this matter here, we may even conjecture

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27   Wenger, *Huit Catéchèses*, 78.

28   Harkins, 227n59.

29   Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 75. Discussing the identity of Chrysostom's exorcists, Finn identifies Theodore's "duly appointed persons" (1,33:12 (1,26); *s* 1,162:4) as exorcists—Touton, "Méthode catéchétique," 282 does the same—but this does not seem right to me. After the exorcisms, it is said that "you are brought by duly appointed persons to the priest (ܡܢ ܐܢ̈ܫܐ ܕܡܬܛܟܣܝܢ ܥܠ ܗܕܐ ܠܘܬ ܟܗܢܐ), as it is before him that you have to (ܗܘܘ ܠܟ) make (ܬܥܒܕ) your engagements and promises to God". (1,33:12–14 (1,26); *s* 1,162:4–6) As the individual candidate is addressed here, and we have earlier established that each candidate was exorcised by just one exorcist, it is not likely that these "persons" are exorcists. It seems more acceptable, instead, to conjecture that these "persons" are deacons.

30   Kaczynski, I, 76.

31   *AC* VIII,26; ed. Metzger, III, 226, 228; tr. Grisbrooke, 77.

32   Cf. Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 147. Neveut, *Notes sur la Liturgie*, 160–161, who wrote before the publication of Chrysostom's instructions by Wenger, and Theodore's catechetical homilies by Mingana, based his conviction concerning the Syrian praxis of baptismal exorcism solely on the *Apostolic Constitutions*, inferring that exorcists were not ordained.

33   This insight has not been dealt with by others like Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 119 and Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 74–75.

that exorcists need not be ordained according to the compiler of the *Constitutions*, just because they were not involved in baptismal affairs. Finally, although exorcists were not ordained, the fact that they are clearly labelled as 'exorcists' endowed with a specific gift of healing seems to imply that they were nonetheless regarded as a distinct class. This seems further confirmed by the observation that the exorcists are put in the same category as confessors, virgins and widows, all of whom are not ordained, yet distinguished by charisma, choice, or virtue.[34]

Based upon these considerations, it seems warranted to assume concerning Theodore's rite that those performing the exorcisms constituted a separate class of 'exorcists', especially because they are explicitly indicated as such. If they were ordained clerics cannot be established with certainty, yet the circumstantial evidence makes me assent with Curtin that they probably were.[35]

It is said that the initiand stands, without his "outer garment"[36] and "barefooted" on "garments of sackcloth" "with outstretched arms in the posture of one who prays" and looks "downwards", while he remains "perfectly quiet". The sackcloth[37] is a rug or garment of goatskin, also known as *cilicium* (κιλίκιον) after Cilicia, where it was originally fabricated.[38] For this reason, the whole ritual during which the initiands stood on sackcloth is also known as 'the rite

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34   *AC* VIII, 23–25; ed. Metzger, III, 224, 226; tr. Grisbrooke, 77.

35   Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 120.

36   Which is a literal rendering of the Syriac ܬܟܣܝܬܐ ܕܠܓܘ (*s* 1,160:20), which leaves no doubt that the candidates were not stark naked at this stage of initiation; they were still wearing their undergarment or tunic (χιτών/ܟܘܬܝܢܐ).

37   The term used here is ܢܚܬܐ ܕܣܥܪܐ (*s* 1,161:3), which may be translated as 'garments/clothing of hair' (Payne Smith, 247a, 384b; Sokoloff, 702b, 1028a; cf. *T&D*: 'tissus de poils'; *BS*: 'härene Matten') and clearly refers to 'sackcloth' as evidenced by Theodore's reference to Psalm 30:11 in the same passage where ܣܩܐ is used (*s* 1,161:8). When discussing the penitential prayer, Theodore uses ܣܩܐ (*s* 2,265:6), see below.

38   *RAC*, s.v. "Cilicium." In antiquity, *cilicium* was used for the fabrication of tents, garments and coats, and was employed in agriculture, navigation, the army, and veterinary medicine. Because of this, *cilicium* mainly involved the lower classes of sailors, soldiers and slaves. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew שַׂק is used for a coarsely woven cloth (also originally made of goatskin), employed for mourning-dresses (cf. Gen. 37:34) and penitential garments (cf. Isa. 3:24). The LXX normally translates שַׂק with σάκκος (Vulg. *cilicium*) and in later tradition, ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῷ, "in sackcloth and ashes" (cf. Matt. 11:21), became a fixed expression. In the early Church, besides the employment in the baptismal rite, the *cilicium* was worn by monks and hermits, and applied as penitential garment. (For a fuller discussion of the *cilicium* in antiquity, Israel, and the early Church, see especially *RAC*, s.v. "Cilicium.")

of the *cilicium*'.[39] In the Occident, the practice of standing (and kneeling) on sackcloth during the pre-baptismal exorcism is attested by Augustine, Quodvultdeus (Cartage, d. ca. 453), and Hildefonse of Toledo (d. 669).[40] The ritual may also be witnessed by Proclus of Constantinople.[41] In the Orient, however, Theodore seems to be "the first witness of this strange rite".[42]

The posture of the baptizand, standing with outstretched arms, is described by Theodore as "the posture of one who prays". It is indeed likely that we have to do here with the common praying pose of antiquity, Judaism, and early Christianity. When praying, it was customary to stand upright with the arms outstretched outward from the body, lightly bent at the elbows, with the palms of the hands upwards.[43] Figures in this 'orant' or 'orans' pose, are frequently

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39   Cf. Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium," 210; cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 80.

40   See Smith, "Garments of Shame," 228–230; Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium," 210–212; Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 114–118. Quasten's claim that the exorcistic use of the *cilicium* was unknown in Milan, Rome, and Gaul (p. 210) is slightly qualified by Smith (p. 228n42), who identifies the rite in the Milanese *Ambrosian Manual*, the rite of Beroldus, and the *Ordo Romanus*. Interestingly, Smith, "Garments of Shame," argues that logion 37 of the Gospel of Thomas—which mentions the treading on clothes—has to be placed within a baptismal context. If true, we may have another witness here of the rite of the *cilicium*. (Smith's thesis is challenged, however, by De Conick & Fossum, "Stripped before God".) Although some efforts have been made to trace back the ritual use of the *cilicium* to Hellenistic sources, especially mystery cults, (see Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 114–115; Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium," 215–216; Smith, "Garments of Shame," 230–231), the widespread use of the *cilicium* in antiquity must guard us against hasty conclusions in this matter. As Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium," 216 wisely put it: "It remains to be seen, therefore, whether or not a folk-custom or popular belief is perhaps the common root of both these rites, the Christian as well as the pagan." Furthermore, it is equally possible, and even more likely, that the Christian ritual usage is mainly dependent on the more antique usage of the *cilicium* in the Old Testament and Jewish tradition (Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 117–118; Smith, "Garments of Shame," 230–232).

41   In his homily "Mystagogy on Baptism" Proclus says: ὡς ἐν πένθει καθεστὼς τοῖς τριχίνοις ἐπιβαίνες ὑφάσμασιν (VIII.49; ed. Leroy, *Proclus de Constantinople*, 193). Barkhuizen, "Proclus of Constantinople," 15 renders the second phrase with "you walk in clothes made of hair". Harkins, 228n61, however, translates with "you walk on sackcloth". According to Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 517a, ἐπιβαίνω may have the meaning of "enter", "go up to, go to", "mount", "walk upon, walk in", "insult, trample upon", "stand upon", "come upon", and "go above, or beyond, transcend". Interestingly, all these different meanings express an upward movement or a being-upon. Therefore, I prefer Harkins's rendering, which we may even adapt to "you stand on sackcloth", or "you trample upon sackcloth".

42   Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium," 210. See Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 127–138 for a discussion of the rite of the *cilicium* in Theodore.

43   For a general discussion of the antique prayer posture and a detailed study of the relation between the pose and the spiritual truth of the ritual, see Witkamp, "Posture of One who Prays". See further *EEC*, s.v. "Orant"; s.v. "Prayer" and especially Philips, "Prayer," 48–51

found in early Christian art, especially as decorations in the catacombs, and add to our understanding of the textual descriptions.[44] So, the pose of the novice basically resembles the usual praying posture. Yet, there is one marked difference between this common prayer position and the posture of the candidate. From Tertullian and Origen we may infer that it was customary to look upwards while praying.[45] This upward look during prayer is also attested by Theodore concerning two rituals of the second rite of the *cilicium*—the prayer and the *apotaxis/syntaxis*.[46] As regards the exorcism, however, Theodore explicitly mentions that the baptizand looks downwards. He instructs the initiand to "remain in that state in order to move the judge to mercy" and qualifies the whole scene as "this picture of captivity".[47] It is clear then, that the downward look fits the penitential character of the whole ritual and it would not be appropriate for the candidate to direct his look towards heaven.

While the candidates stand in the posture described above and remain silent, the exorcists pronounce what is called "the words of exorcism" (ܐܬܠܡ̈ ܕܡ݁ܘܡܝܐ).[48] Like Chrysostom, Cyril, and Egeria, Theodore does not provide a verbatim of the formula of exorcism, possibly instigated by the *disciplina arcani*.[49] But he does describe the general contents of these words:

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and Dölger, "Geschichte des Kreuzzeichens"; cf. *Oxford Handbook*, 747; cf. O'Meara, *Prayer*, 226n665. Some biblical examples are found in 1 Kings 8:22; Ps. 28:2, 44:20, 88:9, 143:6; 1 Tim. 2:8. For explicit descriptions of the prayer posture in the early Church, see especially Tertullian, *Apology* 30.4 (ed. Becker, *Apologeticum*, 164; tr. Arbesmann, Daly & Quain, *Tertullian*, 86. Cf. *On Prayer* 23); Origen, *On Prayer* 31.1–3 (ed. Migne, *PG* 11:549; tr. O'Meara, *Prayer*, 131); cf. 1 *Clement* 2.3 (ed. and tr. Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 46–47). Although standing with outstretched arms was far from typically Christian, the posture was reinterpreted in a specific Christian way as depicting the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ (see Jensen, *Early Christian Art*, 36; Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 613). So, we read in the *Odes of Solomon* 27.1–3: "I stretched out my hands and sanctified my Lord, for the spreading of my hands is his sign. In my outstretched position I formed the upright cross." (ed. and tr. Vleugels, *Odes of Solomon*, 115–116; cf. 42.1–2, cf. 35.7; 37.1). Likewise, Tertullian says in *On Prayer* 14 concerning the position of the hands: "We however not only lift them up, but also spread them out, and, modulating them by the Lord's passion, in our prayers also express our faith in Christ." (ed. and tr. Evans, *Prayer*, 18–19; cf. *On Prayer* 17).

44 For some interesting examples, see Spier, *Picturing the Bible*, 176, 179, 181–182, 185, 192; A general description of the 'orant' in early Christian art is provided by Jensen, *Early Christian Art*, 35–37.

45 Origen *On Prayer* 31.2 (ed. Migne, *PG* 11:549; tr. O'Meara, *Prayer*, 131); Tertullian *Apology* 30.4 (ed. Becker, *Apologeticum*, 164; tr. Arbesmann, Daly & Quain, *Tertullian*, 86).

46 2,36:33 (2,4); 2,45:19 (2,16).

47 1,31:35–32:5 (1,24).

48 1,31:25 (1,23); *S* 1,160:11.

49 Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 76; Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 120.

> They [the exorcists, NW] ask in a loud and prolonged voice that our enemy
> should be punished and by a verdict from the judge be ordered to retire
> and stand far, so that no room and no entry of any kind might be left to
> him from which to inflict harm on us …[50]

This general description finds some interesting parallels with the exorcisms
in the *Barberini Euchologion*.[51] To get an impression of how the formula of
Theodore's exorcism may have looked like, it may be in place here to quote the
first exorcism of the *Euchologion* in full:

> The Lord rebuke you, O devil, the Lord who came into the world and
> tabernacled among men to destroy your tyranny and deliver humankind:
> who upon the tree did *triumph* [cp. Col. 2.15] over the powers that were
> against him; when the *sun was darkened* [Luke 23.45] and *the earth did
> quake*, when *the graves were opened and the bodies of saints arose* [Matt.
> 27:52]: who by death destroyed death, and left him powerless who had
> the power of death, that is, the devil. I adjure you by God, who set forth
> the tree of life, who appointed the Cherubim and the living sword that
> turned to guard it: be rebuked and depart, O unclean spirit. I adjure you
> by him who walked upon the surface of the sea as upon dry land, and
> *rebuked* the raging of the *winds* [Mark 4.39] whose glance dries up the
> depths and his threat melts the mountains [cp. Ps. 97.5]. For he himself
> now commands you through us. Be afraid, go away and depart from these
> creatures, come not back to hide in them, approach them not, seek not
> to command or tear them, neither in night nor day, nor in the hour of
> mid-day: but depart to your own dark abode, until the great day of judg-
> ment which is prepared for you. Fear God who sits upon the throne of
> the Cherubim, and looks down upon the abyss, whom the angels dread,
> which archangels, thrones, lordships, majesties, powers, the many-eyed
> cherubim and the six-winged seraphim: whom the heaven dreads, and
> the earth, the sea, and all that is in them. Go away and depart from the
> sealed, new-chosen servants of Christ our God. I adjure you by him who
> *walks upon the wings of the wind, who makes his angels spirits and his min-
> isters flaming fire* [Ps. 104.4]: go away and depart from these creatures with

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50   1,31:6–8 (1,22); s 1,159:24–25.

51   That there are parallels between the *Ordo of Constantinople* and Theodore's rite may not
      be coincidental. It has been acknowledged that the liturgy of Constantinople has been
      influenced by John Chrysostom, who "brought with him a number of liturgical practices
      which became part of the liturgy of the capital." (Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 112).

all your power and your angels. That the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be glorified now and ever, unto all ages. Amen.[52]

As this formula confirms, the wording of an exorcism normally stayed close to the Biblical text and images.[53] In Theodore's case, moreover, we may infer from the phrases "They ask in a loud and prolonged voice" and "shouts of the exorcist" (ܐܬ‌ܒܐ ܪܐܘܡܐ ܪ‌ܓܝܠ)[54] that the whole scene was intended to frighten the Devil and impress the candidate.[55]

A final remark concerning the *duration* of the exorcisms. Although Theodore describes the exorcism or Lawsuit as a single event, one single phrase reveals that the ritual was probably distributed over several days:

> As to the words of exorcism they have the power to induce you, after having made up your mind to acquire such a great gain, not to remain idle and without work. You are, therefore, ordered *in those intermediary days* to meditate on the words of the profession of faith in order that you may learn it, and they are put in your mouth in order that through a continuous meditation you may strive to be in a position to recite them by heart.[56]

Based upon my reconstruction of the deliverance of the homilies and the relation between the homilies and the actual performance of the rituals,[57] we may conclude that "those intermediary days" (ܒܝܬܐ ܕܒܝܢܝܬܐ ܗܘ ܗܠܝܢ ܝܘܡܬܐ) concern the days between enrolment and the *redditio symboli* during which the initiand was exorcised, possibly from Wednesday until Friday. I therefore disagree with Curtin, who conjectures that Theodore followed the pattern of Chrysostom, i.e. daily exorcisms preceded by instructions.[58] Theodore's exorcisms did not occur on the same days as the instructions, but only began after the final instructions had been delivered.

52　*BE* 87ᵛ–89ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 120; tr. Whitaker, 115–116. For another example of an (elaborate) formula, see *TD* II.7 (ed. Rahmani, 120, line 20–124, line 20; tr. Sperry-White, 25–26). An early, third-century, formula is quoted by Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 125. Concerning Chrysostom's rite, Harkins, "Pre-Baptismal Rites," 228 proposes that "the formula invoked Christ and spoke of punishment, vengeance, and the fires of hell."

53　Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 76.

54　1,33:8 (1,26); *S* 1,162:1.

55　Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 122–123; Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 78–79.

56　1,32:20–26 (1,25); *S* 1,161:8–13.

57　See p. 18.

58　Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 127.

So far the exorcisms. Yet, in order to make a fruitful comparison with Narsai, we also have to discuss here the first ritual of the second rite of the *cilicium*, the penitential prayer, which occurs after the recitation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Theodore describes this ritual thus:

> You stand barefooted on sackcloth while your outer garment is taken off from you, and your hands are stretched towards God in the posture of one who prays. In all this you are in the likeness of the posture that fits the words of exorcism, as in it you have shown your old captivity and the servitude which through a dire punishment you have rendered to the Tyrant; but it is right that after you have cast away that posture and those memories you should draw nigh unto the mystery which implies participation in the future benefits … First you genuflect while the rest of your body is erect, and in the posture of one who prays you stretch your arms towards God … The rest of all your body is erect and looks towards heaven. In this posture you offer prayer to God, and implore Him to grant you deliverance from the ancient fall and participation in the heavenly benefits. While you are in this posture, the persons who are appointed for the service draw near to you and say to you something more than that which the angel who appeared to the blessed Cornelius said to him: your prayers have been heard and your supplications answered…[59]

Since the candidates are addressed collectively here,[60] instead of individually as in the exorcisms, this prayer is probably a group ceremony.[61] Nonetheless, the general scene closely resembles the exorcisms. The candidate again stands barefooted on the *cilicium* without his outer garment[62] with his hands "stretched towards God in the posture of one who prays". This time, however, he does not remain standing, but genuflects while his upper body keeps the common praying position. The phrase "[t]he rest of all your body is erect and

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59   2,36:5–13 (2,2; *s* 165:6–12); 36:17–19 (2,3; *s* 165:14–16); 36:33–37:5 (2,4; *s* 166:3–9).

60   "You stand (ܡܩܝܡܝܢ) barefooted on sackcloth while your outer garment (ܬܟܣܝܬܟܘܢ) is taken off from you (ܡܢܟܘܢ), and your hands (ܐܝܕܝܟܘܢ) are stretched towards God in the posture of one who prays." Etc.

61   Cf. p. 130 and p. 184 ff.

62   This time, 'outer garment' renders ܬܟܣܝܬܐ instead of ܠܒܘܫܐ ܒܪܝܐ which Theodore employed before (see p. 133n36). In the Syriac translation of Ex. 22:26, Acts 12:8, and Heb. 1:12, ܬܟܣܝܬܐ clearly has the meaning of 'outer garment' (cf. Gen. 49:11; Job 24:7, 31:19; Ezek. 18:7). Combined with the similarity of the posture during the exorcism and the penitential prayer, we may safely assume that ܬܟܣܝܬܐ is used synonymously here with ܠܒܘܫܐ ܒܪܝܐ (cf. *T&D*: "vêtement extérieur"; *BS*: "Obergewand").

looks to heaven" is probably best understood as a *totum pro parte*, meaning that the look of the baptizand is directed towards heaven.[63] In this posture, the novice offers a penitential prayer to God, imploring Him to deliver him "from the ancient fall and participation in the heavenly benefits". Subsequently, "the persons who are appointed for the service" (ܗܠܝܢ ܕܥܠ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܩܝܡܝܢ),[64] deacons or priests(?),[65] approach the candidate and, on behalf of God, reply to him—with an answer that is more elaborate than that which Cornelius received from the angel[66]—that he has been delivered from the servitude of the Tyrant and granted participation in the heavenly benefits.[67]

4.1.2   *Function and Meaning of the Ritual*

The following passage makes clear that the exorcisms are strongly connected to and logically follow the preceding enrolment.

> You should learn now the reason for the remaining events, as your enrolment is not effected to no purpose and accidentally only, but after a great judgment (ܕܝܢܐ) had taken place on your behalf. It was necessary for you, who have drawn near to Divine Providence, to have been first delivered from the Tyrant who had attacked you so that, after having been enabled to flee from all the harm of the enemies and avoid another servitude, you might be in a position to enjoy to the full the happiness of this enrolment.[68]

From this perspective, it is understandable that Daniélou maintains that in fact the whole first baptismal homily is devoted to the enrolment.[69] But as the

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63   Cf. 2,45 (2,16).

64   *s* 2,166:7.

65   In the Syriac NT, ܬܫܡܫܬܐ normally renders διαϰονία (e.g. Luk. 10:40; Acts 1:17; Rom. 12:7), which sustains the thought of 'deacons'. However, also ἐφημερία (Luk. 1:5, 8)—a class or division of priests (*BDAG*, 418a)—and λειτουργία (Luk. 1:23; Heb. 8:6; Phil. 2:17; Heb. 9:21)—when used within a priestly context—are translated with ܬܫܡܫܬܐ (cf. Sokoloff, 1674a). So, it seems that ܬܫܡܫܬܐ may refer to deacons as well as priests and we cannot be certain who are meant here. Yet, the phenomenon that Theodore, about half a page later, explicitly speaks of the 'deacons' (ܡܫܡܫܢܐ), who prepare the candidates to recite the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, may indicate that these 'deacons' must be distinguished from the earlier mentioned "persons who are appointed for the service". If so, it is likely that these 'persons' are priests.

66   Acts 10:31; cf. 10:4.

67   2,37:4–14 (2,4); *s* 2,166:9–16.

68   1,26:27–35 (1,17); *s* 1,155:7–12.

69   *Bible and Liturgy*, 22. Cf. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 68, who remarks that "Theodore

main objective of the exorcisms is to deliver the baptizand from the power of the Tyrant, the Devil,[70] the importance of the exorcisms is not limited to the preceding enrolment, but also extends to the following rituals. Only after the candidate has been freed from his servitude to Satan is he able to abjure his old master with his own voice during the following *apotaxis*.[71] This clearly shows the strong ties between these rituals[72] and the importance of the exorcisms—combined with the penitential prayer preceding the *apotaxis*[73]—for the progress of the rite.

It is worth noting that the exorcisms, like any other ritual preceding or succeeding the water bath, are actually a ritualisation of an aspect of baptism, the central ritual by which man really receives deliverance from "the old servitude"[74] and "all evils".[75] Furthermore, while certain aspects are explicitly ritualised by specific ceremonies, it is also the rite as a whole by which these effects are realised. So, though the heavenly registration is ritualised by the enrolment, the whole rite can be seen as a process of registration for citizenship. In the same way, whereas the deliverance from the Devil is particularly ritualised by the exorcisms, the whole rite of initiation may be seen as a liberation from Satan.[76]

In his discussion of the exorcisms, Theodore employs the idea of a lawsuit or courtroom scene (ܕܝܢܐ).[77] It is important to emphasise, however, that he uses

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      interprets the enrolment of the catechumen in terms of a lawsuit to obtain legal title to some possession."

70   Cf. 1,31:10 (1,22); 2,35:19 (2,1).

71   "Formerly, even if you wished it, you did not dare to make use of these words (ܗܠܝܢ ܡܠܐ), because you were afraid of his servitude, but as you have, by a Divine decree, received deliverance from him, you proclaim and abjure him with confidence and by your own words (ܒܩܠܐ ܕܝܠܟ ܡܢ ܟܕܘ), and this is the reason why you say 'I abjure Satan.'" (2,37:35–38:2 (2,5); *s* 2,167:8–13). Mingana consistently renders ܡܠܐ ܗܕܐ and its plural ܡܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ with 'words'. However, in order to avoid the mistaken impression that the candidates were allowed to abjure Satan by their own wording of the formula, it seems better to translate the second time with "by your own voice" (Payne Smith, 505b, 54b; Sokoloff, 194a–b; cf. *T&D* and *BS*, who translate respectively with "de votre propre voix" and "mit eurer eigenen Stimme").

72   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 53 speaks of the ceremony for exorcism as an "extension of the renunciation of Satan". Cf. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 69–70.

73   See our discussion below.

74   3,60:19 (3,15).

75   See 3,62:13 (3,17).

76   Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions*; Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 21; cf. Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 113–114.

77   1,26:27–33:11; *s* 1,155:7–162:4; cf. 2,35:4–7; *s* 2,164, 3–6. ܕܝܢܐ—'judgment', 'lawsuit'—is used

this concept on different levels. Both the actual ritual (the *drama*) and the theological foundation of the same (the *mythos*) are described as a ܪܝܢܐ.[78] Yet, their pictures are not identical and serve their own purpose. This is clearly seen by the different actors involved and the issue at stake. The *mythos* has three actors, viz. Satan (accuser), the candidate (defendant)—representing humanity—and God (judge). The whole scene is depicted as if both Satan and the candidate (humanity) are making their case before God, the judge. During the *drama*, however, the candidate appears not to be able to plead for himself, but needs an advocate, a role fulfilled by the exorcist. And although Satan's accusation is definitely presupposed, there is no indication whatsoever that his role was actually enacted by a 'Devil's advocate',[79] not to mention the fanciful idea of someone 'playing God'. Such suggestions blur the different levels of understanding and fail to distinguish the ritual itself, its interpretation, and its theological foundation. Furthermore, the issue at stake is different in both suits and the *drama* clearly presupposes the *mythos*. The latter deals with the principal question whether Satan is the lawful owner of the baptismal candidate or not, resulting in the condemnation of the Tyrant. The *drama* presupposes this verdict and therefore the advocate directly pleads for the punishment of Satan, instead of arguing (again) his false accusations.[80]

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in *s* 1,155:8; 1,156:4, 7; 1,158:14; 1,159:25; 1,160:3, 6; 1,161:23; 1,162:1; 2,164:4,5. Altough Theodore does not mention it, we may wonder whether the whole idea of a courtroom scene is inspired by Zech. 3:1–5, especially because the change of filthy garments for pure vestments was sometimes seen as a reference to baptism (cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Day of Lights*; ed. Heil, Heck, Gebhardt & Spira, *Sermones*, I, 236, 6–10): "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, 'The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?' Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, 'Remove the filthy garments from him.' And to him he said, 'Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.' And I said, 'Let them put a clean turban on his head.' So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by".

78   For this useful distinction of *mythos* and *drama* I am indebted to Bowman, "Exorcism and Baptism," 261: "So the teaching, the doctrine of the deliverance of man from subjection to the Devil is part of catechetical instruction and is the *mythos* of Exorcism whereas the actual Exorcism before the Sacrament of Baptism is the *drama*."

79   As is suggested by Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 149, who wrongly conflates the *drama* and the *mythos*, see our discussion below. In my "Critical Comparison," 534–536, I also did not yet make this distinction and mainly described the *mythos*.

80   1,31:3–12 (1,22); *s* 1,159:21–160:2.

The *mythos* is depicted as a lawsuit between the Devil and mankind.[81] As already mentioned, the fundamental issue at stake here is whether or not Satan is the legal owner of the initiand. The trial begins with the Tyrant's charge that the baptizand's enrolment and his future eternal life are unjustified. His plea is based upon two arguments: (a) Adam, the forefather of mankind, had wilfully rejected his Maker and chosen Satan's lordship; (b) because of his (Adam's) insubordination, God himself had "pronounced the death sentence upon"[82] mankind and "condemned him to the servitude of this world"[83] Therefore, the Devil maintains, as mankind in general and the initiand in particular has always justly belonged to him, it is impossible for the candidate to receive immortality.[84]

After this plea of the Tyrant, the *competens* is urged "to run with all diligence to the judge and show and establish the title which we possess".[85] He persuades the Judge that Satan's accusation is false. Originally, so the argument goes, mankind belonged to the Creator, who made him in His own image and only afterwards, through the wickedness of the Tyrant and the carelessness of man, this initial state was annihilated resulting in man's subjection to the Devil. From that time on, all mankind fell victim to Satan's oppression and even increased the Devil's sway over him by sinning wilfully.

However, Satan miscalculated himself when he brought an unjust death upon an innocent man, the one assumed[86] by the Lord, by whom He abolished man's sins and made a new beginning. Because of this crime, God, the Judge—after having heard the plea of both sides—condemns the Tyrant for his injustice against Christ and all humanity, and establishes Christ's position by raising Him from the dead, granting Him immortality and immutability, and receiving Him into heaven. As a result of this, Satan's power is broken[87] and the candidates are urged to believe "that all these things have happened and taken place, and that in nothing" they shall "appear henceforth to belong to the Devil."[88]

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81   1,27:21–30:2 (1,18–20); *s* 1,156:4–158:22.

82   1,27:31–32 (1,18).

83   1,27:35–36 (1,18).

84   According to Bowman, "Exorcism and Baptism," 260, Satan's accusation of man before God has much of a 'Christianised Midrash'.

85   1,28:22–23 (1,19).

86   That is the man Jesus Christ, the *homo assumptus*, who has been assumed by the eternal Logos, the *Verbum assumens*. For a discussion of these terms as the basis of Theodore's Christology, see Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 48–65 and Bruns, *Himmel*, 218–236.

87   1,29:31–30:2 (1,20); *s* 1,158:18–22.

88   1,30:3–5 (1,21); *s* 1,158:23–25.

It is interesting to note how the trial unfolds itself. The question whether the enrolment of an individual candidate is lawful or not appears to involve the whole course of salvation history. The final verdict of the lawsuit is even positioned between Christ's death and resurrection (see above). The logic of this whole reasoning can be understood only by the related notions of 'individual' and 'collective'. The individual candidate is able to prove that he originally belonged to God, since he is incorporated into Adam, who served God before his transgression. In a similar way, the neophyte's suit eventually appears to be intertwined with Christ's and the whole of humanity is offered the benefits gained by 'the one assumed'. As such, salvation history becomes the personal history of the candidate.

The *mythos*, i.e. the condemnation of Satan by virtue of Christ's salvation, is the foundation for the success of the baptizand's personal deliverance from evil dominion by the liturgy, the *drama*. In principle, therefore, any fear from the side of the candidate seems unwarranted as there is no doubt that the Devil will be overcome. However, probably to prevent the candidates from underestimating the seriousness of the exorcisms, they are urged to undergo the rituals "*as if* you had no voice and *as if* you were still in fear and dread of the Tyrant …".[89] This 'fear' for the Devil is particularly expressed by the silence and the downward look of the initiand. In addition, to help him identify with his former state of captivity (underpinned by an appeal to Isa. 20:3–4), the baptizand is standing barefooted and 'naked', i.e. without his outer garment, depicting in this way the subjection of a prisoner of war, slave or exile.[90] The basic aim of this posture is "to move the judge to mercy".[91]

At the same time, the candidate is standing on sackcloth so that by the "fact that" his "feet are pricked and stung by the roughness of the cloth" he is reminded of his own sins and impelled to show "penitence and repentance" of the sins of his ancestors "because of which" all mankind has "been driven to all this wretchedness of iniquities".[92] The sackcloth is for Theodore a symbol of sin, both his own and that of his ancestors.[93] This is probably best explained

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89   1,31:26–27 (1,23); s 1,160:12–13 (italics mine). The Syriac has the construction ܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܕ, which is probably best understood as an irrealis (cf. Payne Smith, 13a). So Mingana and *T&D*: "tu te tiens comme si tu tremblais encore et craignais l'usurpateur", but not *BS*: "der du noch zitterst und dich vor dem Tyrannen (τύραννος) fürchtest".

90   1,32:5 (1,24); s 1,160:24 and 2,47:26–27 (2,19); s 2,178:20–21.

91   1,32:4–5 (1,24); s 1,160:23.

92   1,32:12–16 (1,25); s 1,161:3–7.

93   The same idea is found in Augustine. Cf. Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium," 216–218; Smith, "Garments of Shame," 227–230; Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 263; cf. Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 115–116. Harmless, "Receive Today," 357n29 rightly notes that the

by seeing the *cilicium* as a type of the garments of skin which the first pair of mankind received to cover their nakedness.[94] And although it is not likely that the sackcloth really *is* the outer garment which the candidate has taken off—if so, Theodore would definitely have elaborated on that—the fact that he is 'naked' evokes the idea that he is basically treading upon the old man, his old garments, which he has previously put aside. The ritual of standing on the *cilicium*, then, signifies penitence *for*[95] as well as triumph *over* sin. Looking both backward and forward, the rite on the *cilicium* is a real rite of passage. Theodore finds biblical support for this process in Psalm 30:11: "Thou has put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness",[96] which not only typifies the two-stage movement of the present ritual, but also of the whole rite of initiation.[97]

As it is appropriate for the candidate—not being able to fight his own case—to remain silent during the trial, he needs an 'advocate' (ܣܢܐ ܓܝܪܐ),[98] a role fulfilled by the exorcist.[99] This all together stresses the corruption of his former state as well as his present helplessness and dependence on God's grace. Combined with the "shouts of the exorcist" (ܩܥܬܐ ܕܡܘܡܐ ܓܝܪܐ),[100] the dramatic potential of the ritual has been utterly exploited and the whole must have evoked an awe-inspiring experience for the candidates.[101]

In his important study about the development of anti-demonic rituals in early Christian initiation, Kelly provides some interesting observations concerning Theodore's rite compared with other rites of the Levant. When baptismal exorcism made its way from West to East, it evoked different reactions

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use of *cilicium* is one of several interesting cross-Mediterranean links between the baptismal rites known to Augustine and Theodore. Another similarity is that the mystagogy preceded the rite.

94   Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium," 218; Smith, "Garments of Shame," 231–232. Cf. Col. 3:9–10; Eph. 4:22–24.

95   Sustained by the nakedness of the feet, which may also be seen as a sign of penitence (Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 106).

96   1,32:18–19 (1,25); *s* 1,161:8.

97   Cf. Smith, "Garments of Shame," 226.

98   1,33:8 (1,26); *s* 1,162:1.

99   1,31:2–6 (1,22); *s* 1,159:21–23 and 1,33:4–8 (1,26); *s* 1,161:23–162:1.

100   1,33:8 (1,26); *s* 1,162:1.

101   Cf. Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 55–66. The rationale for these dramatic rituals were the changing circumstances of the Church in the fourth and fifth centuries: "… the difference between the worldly and the devout became harder and harder to discern. In a whole host of ways, the baptismal and Eucharistic rites of initiation were presented as dramatic, life-changing events. The sense of the baptismal change from being at home in a pagan world to running the risk of martyrdom—which had gone for good—was reinterpreted in terms of what the late Father Edward Yarnold called 'the Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation'" (Louth, "Mystagogy in Saint Maximus," 377).

from complete acceptance and elaboration to complete rejection.[102] Theodore's rite would fall into a middle category of 'transformation' and appears to be unique in this.[103] The general problem that Fathers like Chrysostom, Cyril, and Theodore faced, was that they were confronted with rites whose presuppositions they no longer shared, the most important being the belief in sin demons and the 'ethical possession'[104] of (especially) the heathen catechumens by such evil spirits. Concerning Cyril and Chrysostom, Kelly contends that

> [n]either Cyril of Jerusalem nor John Chrysostom believed that the pagans who presented themselves for baptism were possessed by demons; yet they had inherited a ritual that treated them as if they were so possessed. They therefore gave to the ritual what we might term a "liturgotropic" interpretation, on the analogy of Robert Grave's concept of iconotropy: that is, the reinterpretation of another culture's religious images to suit one's own mythological presuppositions. Prebaptismal exorcisms were a response, it seems, to the theory of sin demons. The Fathers rejected the theory but kept the practice while giving it another meaning in keeping with their more sophisticated demonology.[105]

But, Kelly maintains, Theodore went a step further and "provides a new solution to the problem of pre-baptismal exorcism: the ceremony is completely transformed to meet the needs of current theology".[106] Kelly observes that Theodore's "exorcists do not exorcize demons, even ostensibly" and contends that the "whole ceremony has been transformed into a courtroom drama."[107] The latter statement needs some qualification, however. As Kelly wrongly conflates the *mythos* and the *drama*, his portrayal of the transformation of Theodore's exorcism looks more radical than it really is. We have earlier established that the pictures of the *mythos* and the *drama* serve their own purpose and

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102   Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 136–157.

103   Ibid., 148–151.

104   Analogous to the belief that sickness was caused by demon possession, it was assumed that the unbelief of the unbaptised was caused by sin demons (Dölger, *Exorzismus*, pp. 137–159). To distinguish the bodily possession of the physically sick from the spiritual sickness of the unbeliever, Dölger speaks in the latter instance of 'ethical posession' ('ethische Besessenheit'; e.g. p. 142).

     Cf. Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, pp. 25–29.

105   Ibid., 146–147.

106   Ibid., 148.

107   Ibid., 149.

cannot be used to amplify each other. The 'dramatic' picture of the *mythos* with the defendant and accuser both making their appeal before the judge is absent from the *drama* where, instead, only the advocate-exorcist—a figure not present in the *mythos*—speaks. This reveals that Theodore's exorcism has not been really 'transformed' into a courtroom scene, but has been 'reinterpreted' as such. This reinterpretation of the ritual also becomes visible by the fact that Theodore presents the exorcisms as one coherent lawsuit, while in reality it consists of different sessions spread over several days. We may wonder, therefore, whether a 'neutral' observer would have experienced the general scene much differently from other exorcisms. Nevertheless, Kelly is right insofar as Theodore's ritual is devoid of any exorcism of demons or evil spirits in the sense of an expulsion from an afflicted person.[108] Furthermore, typical exorcistic characteristics like exsufflation (and/or insufflation)[109] and the use of exorcised water and oil are absent from Theodore's rite.[110] Although it goes too far, then, to contend that Theodore's rite is *completely transformed*

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108   It is worth noting here that Theodore does not reject the existence of demons (ܐܕܝ̈ܘܐ) as such, see e.g. XI,4:14 (XI,4; *s* XI,128:5), XI,4:36 (XI,4; *s*, XI,128:24), 1,26:7 (1,16; *s* 1,154:15), 2,47:2 (2,18; *s* 2,178:3).

109   The blowing on or 'into' the candidate by the celebrant, probably inspired by John 20:22–23 (Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 88–90). The ritual involves both the 'blowing away' of the Devil and the infusion of the Holy Spirit into the candidate. Scholars do not use the terms 'exsufflation' (*exsufflare*) and 'insufflation' (*insufflare*) in an unequivocal way, however. Sometimes, both terms are used to denote the whole ritual and may be seen as synonyms then (cf. Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 124). Other times, the terms are used to distinguish the two aspects of the ritual. 'Exsufflation' then denotes the expelling of the Devil, and 'insufflation' the introduction of the Holy Spirit (cf. Yarnold, 196n12). Yet another approach defines the whole ritual of blowing upon (or in) the candidate as 'insufflation' as distinguished from 'exsufflation', the blowing away of the Devil by the candidate himself as part of the renunciation (Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 85; Kirsten rightly claims that Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 119 indicated the difference between these 'active' and 'passive' rituals. But while Dölger in both instances speaks of 'exsufflation', Kirsten introduces the distinction between 'insufflation' and 'exsufflation').

110   Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 123–124 sees a connection between the shouts of the exorcist and insufflations (= exsufflations) and finds support for this in Cyril's *Procat.* 9. Curtin is right insofar that both rituals induce fear to the Devil. However, the rituals themselves are different and betray a different conceptual framework. As *Procat.* 9 (ed. Cross, 5–6; tr. Yarnold, 82) makes clear, the aim of the breathing on or in the candidate is to make the demon depart from the initiand, which suggests a physical indwelling of the evil spirit. And although Kelly (see above) may be true that Cyril himself did not believe anymore that the candidates were really possessed by evil spirits, the ritual of insufflations he inherited presupposed so. As Theodore's ritual is more radically adapted to an evolved demonology, it is understandable that typical 'exorcistic' rituals like insufflations did not survive this adjustment.

into a courtroom scene, it is certainly true that his ritual has been *divested of distinctive exorcistic attributes* and has been *reinterpreted within a forensic framework.*

After the exorcisms, the candidate is conducted to the bishop in order to recite the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Next, the initiand experiences the second rite on the *cilicium*, which consists of three parts: (a) penitential prayer, (b) *apotaxis/syntaxis*, and (c) anointing of the head (beginning of the mystery). In the present form there is no doubt that these rituals constitute a liturgical unity. This is particularly evident from the bodily movements. At the beginning of the prayer the candidate genuflects and remains kneeling during the *apotaxis/syntaxis* and the anointing after which he is raised on his feet and receives the *orarium.*

Theodore gives the following mystagogy of the kneeling:

> As we have all of us fallen into sin and been driven to the dust by the sentence of death, it is right for us to "bow our knees in the name of Jesus Christ," as the blessed Paul said, and to "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God His Father." In this confession we show the things that accrued to us from the Divine nature through the Economy of Christ our Lord, whom (God) raised up to heaven and showed as Lord of all and head of our salvation. Because all these things have to be performed by us all, who "are fallen to the earth" according to the words of the blessed Paul, it is with justice that you, who through the mystery become partakers of the ineffable benefits, to which you have been called by your faith in Christ, bow your knees, and make manifest your ancient fall, and worship God, the cause of those benefits.[111]

The genuflection has a double meaning: it depicts the candidate's fall as well as his servitude to God (underpinned by Phil. 2:10–11[112]). In this way, the posture is fit to visualise and express both the renunciation and the adherence.[113]

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111   2,36:19–32 (2,3); s 2,165:17–166:2.

112   Cf. Origen, *On Prayer* 31.3; ed. Migne, PG 11:549; tr. O'Meara, *Prayer*, 131. Origen makes use of Phil. 2:10 to defend his opinion that it is appropriate to make a penitential prayer in a kneeling position.

113   Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 73. Chrysostom's ritual and mystagogy is similar to Theodore's, see Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 92–93. Unlike Theodore, however, Chrysostom does not give any attention to the rising; only the kneeling has significance, expressing the old servitude to Satan and the new allegiance to Christ.

Riley has given much attention to the phrase "us all, who 'are fallen to the earth'", a reference to Acts 26:14, which tells that Paul and his companions fell on the earth when Jesus appeared.[114] He sees a parallel between the restoration of Paul and those who journeyed with him by Jesus' command to "rise and stand upon your feet", and the sponsor raising the candidate on his feet. According to Riley, Paul proceeded to his baptism after his 'renunciation and commitment', i.e. his falling and rising. In the same way, he argues, the candidates will be baptised following the rite of renunciation and adherence. Although Theodore only mentions the kneeling, Riley claims that these parallels between the rite of renunciation/adherence and Paul's conversion story, narrated in the remainder of Acts 26, must be intended by Theodore because of "the obvious baptismal allusions" in Acts 26:17–18, where Jesus, after having ordered Paul to rise, continues: "… delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me".[115] Riley concludes that, contrary to Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodore does not use the image of turning from West to East, but of falling and rising to picture the renunciation and adherence.

Riley's proposal is interesting, but hardly convincing. To begin with, it is important to note that Theodore only refers to Paul's falling to the ground and makes no effort whatsoever to exploit the mystagogical potential of the baptismal context of Acts 26. Nowhere does he refer or allude to other images ready for use, like Paul's rising. But of course, Riley's argument is exactly that, although Theodore only refers to the falling, the other parallels are so clear that they must be intended. More specifically, Riley makes three claims: (a) Theodore uses the kneeling and rising to picture the renunciation and adherence; (b) the kneeling and rising parallel the falling and rising in Paul's conversion story; (c) Acts 26:17–18 alludes to baptism and confirms that Theodore intends the parallel between Paul's conversion story and the ritual of renunciation and adherence. The first statement is clearly false: the rising is *not* included

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114   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 72–73. The apostle's conversion story is narrated in Acts 9, 22 and 26. Although Riley does not motivate his choice for Acts 26, there is little doubt that Theodore indeed refers to this particular version of Paul's *metanoia*. The chapters 9 and 22 only mention Paul falling to the ground, whereas in 26:14 Paul, speaking in the first person plural, also includes his companions, saying: "we had all fallen to the ground" (ܗܘܰܝܢ ܢܦ݂ܰܠܢ ܟܠܰܢ ܥܰܠ ܐܰܪܥܳܐ). This is in agreement with Theodore's phrase: "all of us who are fallen to the earth" (ܟܠܰܢ ܕܰܢܦ݂ܺܝܠܺܝܢ ܥܰܠ ܐܰܪܥܳܐ) (2,36:27 (2,3); *s* 2,165:23–24).

115   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 72.

in the ritual of the renunciation and commitment. Both the renunciation and adherence are made while kneeling; only after the *apotaxis/syntaxis* (and the signing on the forehead!) is the candidate raised to his feet. As established above—and also observed by Riley(!)—the double meaning of the kneeling makes it fit for both the renunciation and the commitment. It is completely understandable, therefore, that Theodore refers only to the apostle's falling to the ground as this picture both comprises the renunciation and the adherence. So, in order to be able to give any merit to the second statement at all, Paul's rising must parallel the concluding rising of the candidate. I do not think, however, that Theodore really intends this parallel. First of all, the reference to Acts 26 and the description of the ritual of the rising seem too far apart[116] for such an implicit parallel 'to work'. Secondly, the rising of the candidate is not involved in the conversion dynamic—as in Paul's experience—but concludes and confirms, not only the renunciation and adherence as such, but the whole ritual unit from the penitential prayer until the signing. To parallel the rising of the candidate with Paul's restoration would therefore incorrectly shift meaning from the *syntaxis* to the rising and so blur the whole picture. Riley's third contention is likewise vulnerable to criticism. Although it may be that Acts 26:17–18 alludes to baptism, the turning from "darkness to light" fits neither the picture of a kneeling candidate during the *apotaxis* and *syntaxis*, nor Theodore's mystagogy of these rituals. Ironically, such a turning from darkness to light better suits a ritual turning from West to East, the presence of which in Theodore's rite Riley has rightly rejected. It seems highly questionable, therefore, that a passage seemingly not suitable to sustain the praxis of a ritual kneeling during both the renunciation and commitment, could at the same time pave the way for just such a ceremony by justifying intended parallels between Paul's conversion and the ritual.

An important finding in the above refutation of Riley's opinion is that the ritual rising of the candidate is not included in the conversion dynamic of the renunciation and commitment. The rising does not even conclude the *apotaxis/syntaxis* as such, but the whole liturgical unit beginning with the penitential prayer up to the signing on the forehead. Although a treatment of the rising falls beyond the scope of the present chapter, it seems appropriate to discuss its meaning here as a stepping stone for a further exploration of the relationship between the prayer and the preceding exorcisms. Theodore explains that the meaning of the rising is six-fold (my numbering):

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116   Eleven pages in Mingana's English translation.

> By your rising from your genuflexion you show (1) that you have cast
> away your ancient fall, (2) that you have no more communion with earth
> and earthly things, (3) that your adoration and prayer to God have been
> accepted, (4) that you have received the stamp which is the sign of your
> election to the ineffable military service, (5) that you have been called to
> heaven, and (6) that you ought henceforth to direct your course to its life
> and citizenship while spurning all earthly things.[117]

The final three elements most likely refer to the signing,[118] directly preced-
ing the rising. The referent of the first three elements is the penitential prayer
preceding the *apotaxis/syntaxis*. This becomes clear from Theodore's explicit
definition of the aim of the prayer, which is to "grant … deliverance from the
ancient fall and participation in the heavenly benefits."[119] At the end of the pen-
itential prayer, the candidate is promised that his prayers *have been heard and
his supplications answered*.[120] This agrees with the third meaning of the ris-
ing, viz. "that your adoration and prayer to God have been accepted". In this
way, the rising neatly links with the posture of kneeling—picturing the fall—
and the aim and outcome of the prayer, completely ignoring the intervening
apotaxis/syntaxis. This makes us wonder whether the rising originally directly
concluded the prayer, and the *apotaxis/syntaxis* was later inserted disconnect-
ing and dislocating the prayer and the rising?

   As a matter of fact, there are indications that in an earlier phase of the rite
not only the rising directly followed the prayer, but also the prayer directly suc-
ceeded the preceding exorcisms. First of all, it is noteworthy that, although the
aim of the prayer is to "grant … deliverance from the ancient fall and partic-
ipation in the heavenly benefits", the answer the candidate receives does not
concern the fall but deliverance from the Devil:

> God has looked upon your tribulations which you were previously under-
> going, and had mercy upon you because you were for a long time captives
> of the Tyrant, and served a cruel servitude to him. He saw the number and

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117   2,47:16–23 (2,19); *s* 2,178:13–18.
118   See 2,47:8–13 (2,19); *s* 2,178:7–11, where Theodore says: "When the priest performs these
       things for you and signs you with a sign on your forehead, he separates you from the rest
       as a consequence of the aforesaid words, and describes that you are the soldier of the true
       King and a citizen of heaven. The sign (with which you have been signed) demonstrates
       that you have communion with, and participation in, all these things."
119   2,36:35–37:1 (2,4); *s* 2,166:4–6.
120   2,37:4–5 (2,4); *s* 2,166:9. Italics mine.

> the nature of the calamities which you have endured, and this moved Him
> to deliver you from that servitude and from the great number of ancient
> tribulations ...[121]

This tension between the intended aim of the prayer and the answer given is
partly solved if the answer would directly be followed by the rising, expressing
man's deliverance from the fall. In this manner, the final result of the prayer fits
its aim. Yet, there would still be an incongruity between the answer itself and
the purpose of the prayer. Or to put it differently, if the rising could be seen as
an answer to the prayer, so to speak, where does the 'answer' itself correspond
to then? There is little doubt that the answer to the prayer—liberation from
the Tyrant's servitude—refers back to and connects the prayer with the exor-
cisms. It seems then, that the answer to the prayer does not in the first place
correspond with the prayer itself, but with the exorcisms, the effectiveness of
which it confirms by a Divine decree. However, the exorcisms themselves were
already concluded by such a Divine decree as "... by God's decision [lit. "decree
of judgment"] (ܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܪܐ ܐܠܗܐ) the Tyrant has submitted and yielded to
the shouts of the exorcist and been condemned ..."[122] So, there are in fact two
Divine 'decrees' as a response to the exorcisms: one at the end of the exorcisms
themselves, another concluding the prayer and summing up the exorcistic pro-
cess of deliverance from evil. At the beginning of the *apotaxis*, elaborating
on the formula "I abjure Satan", Theodore refers to the effectiveness of such
a Divine decree as he remarks:

> Formerly, even if you wished it, you did not dare to make use of these
> words, because you were afraid of his servitude, but as you have, by a
> Divine decree, received deliverance from him, you proclaim and abjure
> him with confidence and by your own words, and this is the reason why
> you say "I abjure Satan."[123]

The Syriac underlying Mingana's translation of the phrase "... but as you have,
by a Divine decree ..."—ܡܛܠ ܕܟܕ ܗܫܐ ܒܝܕ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܚܪܐ ܡܚܣܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ—is
probably better rendered as "... but as you have, through the exorcisms (and) by
a Divine decree of judgment ...".[124] The primary referent of the 'Divine decree' in

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121   2,37:5–11 (2,4); *s* 2,166:9–14.
122   1,33:7–8 (1,26); *s* 1,162:1–2. Theodore repeats this fact, using the same terms (which Min-
       gana renders "Divine verdict"), at the beginning of homily 2 (2,35:7; *s* 2,164:5).
123   2,37:35–38:3 (2,5); *s* 2,167:8–13.
124   Cf. *T&D*: "Mais puisque, grâce aux exorcismes, la sentence divine vous a procuré la lib-

the present form is most likely God's judgment over Satan as a result of the exorcisms. Especially because Theodore employs exactly the same phrase there: ܠܟ ܕ ܟܢ ܐ ܐܠܗܐ. With respect to content, however, the 'Divine decree' judging Satan and enabling the candidate to abjure the Tyrant with his own words, could equally refer to God's answer to the penitential prayer, shortly preceding the *apotaxis*. It is my contention that this whole situation becomes understandable if we suppose that the prayer originally directly concluded the exorcisms. In that case the answer to the penitential prayer *was* the 'Divine decree'. That such a suggestion is not farfetched becomes clear if we consider Theodore's description of the candidate's posture right at the beginning of his discussion of the penitential prayer. As during the exorcisms, the candidate stands barefooted on sackcloth without his outer garment and his hands outstretched in the position of one who prays. "In all this you are in the likeness of the posture that fits the words of exorcism" (ܘܒܚܠܡ ܗܘܐ ܟܘܡܚܬܐ ܕܡܘܡܬܐ ܕܡܘܡܬܐ ܕܡܫܬܘ),[125] Theodore affirms. The starting-point of the prayer neatly corresponds to the exorcisms. So, the general scene of the prayer is quite similar to that of the preceding exorcisms.[126] Two more observations confirm the strong ties between the exorcisms and the prayer. (a) The general aim of the initiand's posture during the exorcisms and the penitential prayer is similar, i.e. to invoke mercy (ܪ̈ܚܡܐ) from God.[127] (b) The noun 'Tyrant' (ܛܪܘܢܐ) as a designation for the Devil is only used within the context of the exorcisms and the penitential prayer.[128]

The prayer not only connects well with the exorcisms, it also completes them. It takes up where the exorcisms left off and continues the ritual, so to speak. The initiand kneels down on the sackcloth, keeps his upper body straight, stretches his arms to God and looks to heaven. One of the explanations Theodore gives for the kneeling is that it expresses the fall, which harmonises with and complements the exorcisms and especially fits the *cilicium* as a symbol of sin. It is obvious that man's fall and his servitude to Satan are strongly

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ération ..." and *BS*: "... da ihr aber durch die Exorzismen mit göttlichem Urteil Befreiung erlangt habt ..." It is possible that Mingana just overlooked ܕܡܘܡܬܐ. Another possibility is that he interpreted ܕܡܘܡܬܐ as 'oath', another possible meaning of the noun (Sokoloff, 726a; Payne Smith, 258a). However, other occurrences of ܕܡܘܡܬܐ are rendered by Mingana with 'exorcism' (1,31:25 (1,23; *S* 1,160:11); 1,32:20 (1,25; *S* 1,161:9); 1,33:6 (1,26; *S* 1,161:24)) and it is unclear why we should translate differently here.

125   2,36:7–8 (2,2); *S* 2,165:8–9.
126   The same is true for Chrysostom's rite, see Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 92.
127   Compare 1,31:37 (1,24; *S* 1,160:19); 1,32:4–5 (1,24; *S* 1,160:23) with 2,37:7 (2,4; *S* 2,166:10–11).
128   For references, see p. 180.

connected. In the *mythos* of the exorcisms, Satan started his defence narrating Adam's disobedience by which man wilfully chose his lordship. Nevertheless, the exorcisms mainly focus on the candidate's servitude to Satan, while the penitential prayer concentrates on the fall. In this way, these rituals plainly complement each other.[129] Together they ritualise the baptizand's liberation from the consequences of Adam's disobedience.

Finally, although Theodore presents the prayer, the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, and the concluding rising as a liturgical unit, contrary to the rather fluent transitions between the *apotaxis*, *syntaxis* and the rising, the transition between the prayer and the *apotaxis* is somewhat abrupt. Concluding the prayer and introducing the renunciation, Theodore remarks that "[i]t is now time for you to learn the things through which you will surely receive deliverance from your ancient tribulations, and enjoy the good things that have been shown to you."[130] Although Theodore has done his best to relate the (posture of the) prayer to the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, he cannot hide his hesitancy concerning the status of the former with respect to the latter.

Based on the above considerations, I surmise that originally the exorcisms were directly followed by the penitential prayer, which concluded with the rising of the candidate. Both the posture and the aim of the rites complement each other. First, the candidate experienced the exorcisms while standing on sackcloth with outstretched arms and his head downwards. After this deliverance from Satan's servitude—probably concluding the final exorcism—the initiand directly genuflected on the *cilicium* and looked upwards with his arms still outstretched, expecting from God "deliverance from the ancient fall and participation in the heavenly benefits". God's answer, His judgment (ܠܬ ܪܒܝ ܐܠܘܗܐ) affirmed the effectiveness of the exorcisms: the candidate was defini-

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129 Although it would go too far to consider Riley, *Christian Initiation* a proponent of my reconstruction—as he is silent on the matter—it is worth mentioning that he also observed the strong relationship between the exorcisms and the penitential prayer. With reference to 'the hands and the gaze' he says that "it reveals the need of the candidates of God's help toward freedom, to rise from the ancient fall, summing up the import of the exorcistic ceremonies of the catechumenate which were meant to help to this purpose of liberating the candidate fallen under the power of evil." (p. 74). And concerning the answer to the prayer he remarks: "The kneeling symbolizes man's return to the dust of the earth through God's sentence of death and consequent servitude to Satan. This familiar theme of slavery to Satan and deliverance to freedom is expressed particularly by the formula developed from the message of the angel to Cornelius which those appointed for the service speak to the kneeling candidates. The long prayers of the catechumenate, the time of exorcism, the awareness of servitude are the content of this message." (p. 71).

130 2,37:14–17 (2,4); *s* 166:16–18.

tively liberated from his servitude to the Devil. Finally, the baptizand was raised to his feet to symbolise that his prayer had been answered and his fall overcome. By these rituals, the candidate was delivered from the strongly intertwined evils of the servitude to Satan and the corrolary of the fall. As a consequence of this proposal, the *apotaxis/syntaxis* would originally have been performed in a standing position.[131] Later developments would then have seen a disconnection of the prayer from the exorcisms, together with an insertion of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and a shift of the prayer towards the *apotaxis/syntaxis* with which it became more or less connected, resulting in a further disconnection from the rising which was shifted towards the end of the *syntaxis*. The *apotaxis/syntaxis* was now performed no longer while standing, but in a kneeling position. (And when the first ritual of the mysteries merged with the preceding act of adherence, the signing on the forehead positioned itself between the *syntaxis* and the rising.)[132] Since the 'Divine decree' was too far removed from the exorcisms now, it was necessary to insert another 'decree' as a direct result of the exorcisms, while the contents of the original decree were preserved in the description of the penitential prayer.

To sum up, this proposal explains: (1) the fact that the meaning of the rising of the candidate refers back to the prayer, without touching upon the *apotaxis/syntaxis*; (2) the somewhat rigid transition from the prayer to the *apotaxis*; (3) the existence of two similar Divine decrees, which have the same liturgical function; (4) the phenomenon that the prayer and the exorcisms are so similar in matter, form, and scope; (5) the fact that the prayer seems to continue directly where the exorcisms left off, completely neglecting the intermediate recitations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Although this development most probably cannot be attributed to one factor, one of the occasions may have been the insertion of the Creed[133] and the Lord's Prayer. In particular the place of the Our Father in the rite was far from established in the fourth century, and the position in Theodore's rite seems unique.[134]

Whether one is prepared to follow the above conjectured development or not, it cannot be denied that the current place of the penitential prayer is somewhat awkward. It seems to rehash the already finished exorcisms, while the relation with the following *apotaxis* is a bit wooden. Interestingly, later developments saw two different solutions to this problem. A first way out was to omit

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131   Possibly accompanied with a ritual turning from West to East.
132   Meyers, "Structure," 37.
133   Gerber, *Nicänum*, 90–92.
134   Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 186–187.

the prayer altogether. This option is hinted at by the *synopsis* of the homily, which does not contain the penitential prayer. As already mentioned in the 'Introduction',[135] Leonhard has convincingly shown that these summaries at the beginning of the homilies 12–16 are not original but are the product of a later translator.[136] Although these synopses are mainly composed of verbatim quotes from the homilies, in several places they disagree with the actual text and reflect the liturgical situation of the compiler's time.[137] An example of this phenomenon in the *synopsis* under consideration is that it is said that the candidate abjures "Satan and all his angels, and all his works …", while Theodore himself does not mention "all his works" in his discussion of the renunciation. Leonhard contends that the additional phrase in the *synopsis* echoes a later liturgical phase of adult initiation and must therefore still antedate the reform of Išōʻyahb III (7th cent.).[138] The absence of any mention of the penitential prayer in the *synopsis* may then be another adaptation reflecting later liturgical praxis. The chance that the compiler just overlooked this part is not likely as there are no other instances of rituals which are present in the text, yet absent in the *synopsis*. Another approach is provided by Narsai's rite wherein, as we will see more extensively below, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer are absent, and the Lawsuit is constituted of two acts which parallel Theodore's exorcism and penitential prayer.

4.2 Narsai of Nisibis

4.2.1 *Description and Discussion of the Ritual*
Narsai describes the ritual as follows:

> He first entreats the stewards of Holy Church to present him at the door of the King, that he may speak his words. The stewards are the priests, the ministers of the Mysteries, to whom is committed the treasury of the Spirit to dispense. To one of them the wanderer, the exile, approaches, that they may set him free from the subjection of the Evil One who took him captive. As an exile he stands naked, without covering; and he shews him (the priest) the toil and labour of his captors' house: 'I appeal to Thee, O King' …

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135   See p. 14.
136   Leonhard, "Ṣūrat ktāb".
137   Ibid., 419 ff.
138   Ibid., 423–424.

By means of his petition he frames an indictment against his captor, and convicts him out of the law of God. To the servants of the King he gives the pen of the word of his mouth; and they write (it) down and bring him before the Judge. The priests he asks (to be) as an advocate (συνήγο-ρος) in the suit against the suit (opposed to him); and they plead the cause for him while he is silent. As in a lawsuit the priest stands at the hour of the Mysteries, and accuses the devil on behalf of sinners. The sinner also stands like a poor man that has been defrauded; and he begs and entreats that mercy may help him in the judgment. Naked he stands and stripped before the Judge, that by his wretched plight he may win pity to cover him. Without covering he pleads his cause against his adversary, that the King may see him and swiftly exact judgment for him.

He bends his knees and bows his head in his confusion, and is ashamed to look aloft towards the Judge. He spreads sackcloth (upon him); and then he draws near to ask for mercy, making mention of his subjection to the Evil One. … He is in dread of him, therefore his face is looking upon the ground till he hears the voice of forgiveness, and then he takes heart.[139]

Obviously, Narsai highly dramatises the whole ritual by portraying it as a court-room scene. By depicting the candidate as a wanderer who begs the priests to deliver him from Satan's dominion, Narsai vividly describes the baptizand's return to his Creator and Saviour. As we will discuss more fully below, this 'return' becomes further mystagogically colorised when Narsai adds the pic-ture of the Prodigal Son as the archetype of the baptismal candidate. It is not likely, however, that the actual ritual underlying this poetic rendition con-sists of much more than the initiand presenting himself to the priests after having made his renunciation. The non-realistic character of the whole scene is further underlined by the plea Narsai puts into the mouth of the candi-date "on the day of his return, after the manner of the story of the younger son":[140]

'I appeal to Thee, O King' cries the captive to the King's servants, 'approach the King and entreat for me, that He may be reconciled to me. Enter and say to Him, "One of Thy servants has returned from captivity, and lo, with love he beseeches to see Thy face." I have verily been made a captive by

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139   22,362:1–9 (s :1–6); 22,362:37–363:17 (s 362:23–363:10); 22,363:14–24 (s :13–14). Additions in parentheses are Connolly's.

140   22,363:21–22; s :12–14.

the slave that rebelled against Thy Lordship; free my life from his slavery, that he may not deride me. I am Thy servant, good Lord, and the son of Thy handmaid, why should I serve a wicked slave who has revolted from Thee? Heretofore I have wickedly served the all-wicked one; ransom me from him, that I may be Thine, for Thine I am.'[141]

From a liturgical point of view, it just seems too much for a baptismal candidate to make such an elaborate and sophisticated petition. An interesting parallel which confirms our supposition concerns the *syntaxis*. Although Narsai remains silent on the exact formula, as we will see below, he puts an elaborate paraphrase of it in the mouth of the baptizand.[142] We have to distinguish carefully, then, between dramatic mystagogy and ritual reality.[143] In a similar way, phrases like "… and he begs and entreats that mercy may help him in the judgment" and "Without covering he pleads his cause against his adversary …" may be due to Narsai's tendency to dramatise and do not necessarily have a basis in the actual ritual.

After having peeled the onion, we get the following picture of the ritual. First, the candidate presents himself to the priests. Since Narsai makes mention of both the plural 'priests' (ܟܗ̈ܢܐ) and the singular 'priest' (ܟܗܢܐ), we get the impression that the ritual was performed by the bishop ('the priest'),[144] assisted by several priests. While the pontiff pleads the baptizand's case with words we remain ignorant of, the candidate is standing "naked, without covering" and silent.[145] Next, the baptizand genuflects, spreads sackcloth, and looks downwards until he receives forgiveness.[146] Since the candidate is potrayed as

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142   See p. 201.

143   We already encountered this difference between liturgical fact and interpretation in our discussion of Theodore's Lawsuit. Other interesting examples of interpretation presented as liturgical fact are provided by Proclus ("Mystagogy on Baptism"; ed. Leroy, *Proclus de Constantinople*; tr. Barkhuizen, "Proclus of Constantinople") and 'Cyril' (*MC* 1.4; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 98, 100; tr. Yarnold, 170). Especially Proclus' homily is illustrative here as the main part of it consists of interpretation put into the mouth of the initiand.

144   For the meaning of the singular 'priest' (ἱερεύς/ܟܗܢܐ) in the fourth/fifth centuries, see p. 54.

145   Although we are not informed here concerning the exact posture of the catechumen, we may surmise that he is standing in the common prayer position: looking upwards (or downwards, as in Theodore's rite?) with his arms outstretched, lightly bent at the elbows and the palms of his hands turned upwards. Cf. Witkamp, "Posture of One Who Prays".

146   In this phase the candidate seems to break his silence as Narsai says that "he draws near to

someone who prays, it is possible that he took the common praying posture with his hands outstretched. So far the general outlook of the ritual. Yet, two aspects deserve a closer look: the 'spreading' of sackcloth and the initiand's 'nakedness'.

Succeeding the phrase "[h]e spreads sackcloth" (ܣܐܡ ܣܩܐ), Connolly added "upon him" in parentheses. According to Quasten "[t]his addition, which is not in the text, is perhaps responsible for the fact that the passage was never understood as it should be."[147] Supposing that Narsai witnesses to the same rite of the *cilicium* as Theodore, Quasten contends that "[t]he candidate does not spread the sackcloth 'upon him' but before himself on the floor in order to stand on it during the exorcism."[148] Quasten is certainly right that the 'upon him' is not in the Syriac, and the presumed parallel with the actually existing rite as described by Theodore—instead of conjecturing a rite without any precedent—gives his contention some credit. However, Quasten's suggestion that the baptizand spreads the *cilicium* on the floor "in order to stand on it during the exorcism" does not seem warranted by the text, since the sackcloth is mentioned in the context of the candidate's genuflection, which would make him kneeling, not standing on it.

Quasten's view has been contested by Smith, who defends Connolly's conjecture.[149] Smith claims that Connolly's "upon him" is sustained by Augustine's description of the North African rite of the *cilicium*, which says:

> So amid all these gangs of people vexing and troubling you, put on sackcloth, and humble your soul with fasting. Humility is rewarded with what pride has been denied. And you indeed, while you were being scrutinized, and that persuader of flight and desertion was being properly rebuked by the terrifying omnipotence of the Trinity, were not actually clothed in sackcloth, but yet your feet were symbolically standing on it.[150]

From this passage Smith infers that in the African rite the catechumen was first clothed with sackcloth, before he took it off and trampled on it. This would support Connolly's 'upon him'. However, Smith's proposal is not without problems. In his homily, Augustine addresses the *competentes* shortly after the

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ask for mercy, making mention of his subjection to the Evil One". It is more likely, however, that we are confronted here with a dramatising portrayal as pointed out below.

147   Quasten, "Exorcism of the Cilicium," 212–213.

148   Ibid., 213.

149   Smith, "Garments of Shame," 229n43.

150   Augustine, *Sermon* 216.10 (ed. Migne, *PL* 38:1076–1082; tr. Hill, *Sermons*, 173).

scrutiny/exorcism following the Lenten enrolment.[151] Referring back to their experience of this rite, Augustine encourages his hearers to continue the battle with Satan, the disciplining of the body, and the pursuit of virtues. After all, conversion is a process and their journey has just begun.[152] It is within this broader context that Augustine's advice to put on sackcloth has to be understood. The passage does not describe the ritual the candidates just experienced, but the continuing attitude of humility they have to pursue, assisted by wearing sackcloth and fasting. Although sackcloth was also used during the preceding exorcism, Augustine expressly reminds the *competentes* that "you indeed, while you were being scrutinized … were not actually clothed in sackcloth, but yet your feet were symbolically standing on it." So it seems that Smith misinterprets the reference to sackcloth in Augustine's homily, which makes the parallel with Narsai unjustified.

Moreover, if Smith were right, Augustine's ritual would include both the wearing and the spreading of the sackcloth on the ground in order to trample on it. Smith himself suggests "a two-part movement: the candidate strips off the garment and then tramples on it."[153] But if we would apply such a pattern to Narsai, the 'upon him' could only refer to a ceremony of vesting, preceding the stripping and trampling. Yet, if we would follow Smith's own line of reasoning, it seems more likely for the 'spreading' to refer to the stripping-part in this stage of the rite. Otherwise, we would have the rather odd situation of Narsai only mentioning the vesting without ever touching upon the much more symbolically important stripping and trampling. As, however, the candidate is already indicated as 'naked and stripped'[154] before he spreads sackcloth, it is not plausible that the 'spreading' refers to another stripping.

Of course, the above refutation of Smith's argument does not disprove Connolly's conjecture as such. It may even find some support in the Syriac *Acts of John* which describes a group of people in preparation for baptism as "barefooted and girded with sackcloth, dust on their heads, faces covered with soot …".[155] As, however, this conventional way of mourning may have been instigated by the context of the story, it is far from clear whether it reflects a ritual praxis.[156] So, by lack of clear evidence of a ritual wearing of sackcloth, Quasten's suggestion—which is informed and sustained by the external testimony

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151   Hill, *Sermons*, 174n1; Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 261–262, 265.
152   Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 271–274.
153   Smith, "Garments of Shame,"229n43.
154   See the fuller discussion concerning the candidates' nakedness below.
155   Klijn, "Syriac Acts of John," 219.
156   Ibid., 222.

of Theodore and other sources—seems the most promising.[157] An extra argument, which I will develop in the following pages, further reinforces Quasten's view.

Somewhat surprisingly, both Quasten and Smith only concentrated on the sackcloth (ܣܩܐ), ignoring the accompanying verb 'to spread' (ܫܛܚ) in the phrase "he spreads sackcloth" (ܣܩܐ ܫܛܚ).[158] The verb ܫܛܚ (or ܫܛܚ) may have the meaning of 'to lie down (flat)', spread out, 'extend', 'prostrate', and figuratively 'to humble oneself'.[159] According to Payne-Smith, ܫܛܚ with ܣܩܐ and/or ܩܛܡܐ ('ashes') means 'to put on ...'. Yet, this claim does not seem (fully) justified and I contend, instead, that ܫܛܚ with ܣܩܐ expresses the practice of 'spreading sackcloth on the ground' instead of 'putting it on'. This thesis is based upon the evidence supplied by two witnesses: the Peshitta Old Testament and Recension 'B' of the Syriac martyr act *The Testimony of Mār Šemʿōn Barṣabāʿē and his companions.*

In order to give due weight to the evidence below, it is significant to first shortly address the date and place of origin of our sources. It is generally accepted that the Syriac Old Testament was made in the second century A.D., long before the time of Narsai.[160] And most scholars agree that the Syriac version of the Hebrew Old Testament[161] originated in Edessa, the city where Narsai lived and worked before his departure to Nisibis.[162] So, it is reasonable to suppose that Narsai's vernacular and the Syriac of the Peshitta are closely related. What is more, as the most widely used version, the Peshitta Old Testament undoubtedly profoundly influenced the language of faith, theology and liturgy.[163]

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157 A starting point for another effort to sustain Connolly's suggestion may be found in Cyril of Jerusalem's *Procat.* 9 (ed. Cross, 5; tr. Yarnold, 82) where it is said that the candidate's face was veiled during the exorcism. Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 100–105 has extensively discussed the ritual veiling in antiquity and concludes that it was a customary symbol of mourning, abjection, and penance. One could suggest that Narsai's spreading of sackcloth is in fact a 'veiling'. There is no doubt that such a ritual would perfectly fit the context in general and the posture of the neophyte in particular. Unfortunately, we have no indication whatsoever that in Cyril's or any other rite sackcloth was used for the covering of the head, which makes the parallel uncertain. But more importantly, as I will indicate below, the act of 'putting on a veil' is not in concurrence with the meaning of the verb ܫܛܚ ('to spread').

158 22,363:15–16; *s* :9.

159 Payne Smith, 270a; Sokoloff, 759a.

160 Cf. Ter Haar Romeny & Morrison, "Peshitta," 326b.

161 The Syriac Old Testament was directly made from the Hebrew. Cf. Weitzman, *Syriac Old Testament*, 1; Ter Haar Romeny & Morrison, "Peshitta," 329a.

162 Cf. *EEC*, s.v., "Peshitta". For a more profound discussion of both date and place, see Weitzman, *Syriac Old Testament*, 247–258.

163 See Brock, "Syriac Versions in the Liturgy", who asserts that "the Peshitta has had an influ-

The Testimony of Mār Šemʿōn Barṣabāʿē and his companions narrates the persecution and martyrdom of several East Syrian Christians—including the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon—in the early 340s during the reign of the Sassanid ruler Shapur II (309–379).[164] This martyr act is delivered in two versions, a shorter and a longer one, commonly referred to as Recensions 'A' and 'B'.[165] Both versions contain the story of a certain Guhštāzād, head of the eunuchs at the king's court,[166] but the more elaborate (and later) Recension B includes some information relevant for our present study not present in Recension A. According to Wiessner's analysis and reconstruction, B is a composite document dependent on different sources.[167] The oldest source (ABx) may have originated in Seleucia-Ctesiphon during the reign of Yazdegerd I (399–421).[168] Interestingly, ABx probably already included the story of Guhštāzād, although we remain uncertain concerning the details of this early version, let alone the exact wording.[169] Wiessner dates B itself no earlier than the end of the fifth century.[170] So, there is a possibility that the time of origin of the phrase of our interest included in the East Syrian document B overlaps with the time of Narsai's writing activity.

Let us have a closer look now at the data and start with the Peshitta. In the Hebrew Old Testament, sackcloth (שַׂק) is used with a variety of verbs. Interestingly, of all these instances only יצע ('lay, spread') is translated in the Peshitta with ܡܟܣ.[171] The two places were this occurs are Isa. 58:5 and Est. 4:3 where it

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ence on later Syriac writers that is analogous to that of the King James Version on subsequent English Literature." (p. 3). Cf. Ter Haar Romeny & Morrison, "Peshitta," 329b.

164 A detailed discussion of the dates of the martyrdom of Šemʿōn Barṣabāʿē and the great massacre under Shapur II is provided by Burgess, "Dates". See Moffett, *Christianity in Asia*, 137–147 for a discourse on 'The Great Persecution'. A helpful guide to the different martyr acts is found in the appendix of Brock, *Holy Mar Máin*, 77–125.

165 For the Syriac text, see Bedjan, *Acta martyrum*, 123–130 (A, only first part); 131–207 (B). The Syriac text with a Latin translation is provided by Kmosko, *Simeon bar Sabbaʿe*, 715–778 (A); 779–960 (B). The many parallels between A and B are indicated by Kmosko with italics. A German translation of Bedjan's text of B is given by Braun, *Persischer Märtyrer*, 5–57. Contrary to the opinion of older scholarship, Wiessner, *Märtyrerüberlieferung*, 42 ff. has shown that B is not dependent on A but both are dependent on a common source ABx.

166 See Kmosko, *Simeon bar Sabbaʿe*, 750–758 (A) and 831–841, 866–890 (B).

167 Wiessner, *Märtyrerüberlieferung*, 42 ff., 74–76. Wiessner designates these sources as ABx, By, and L.

168 Ibid., 189.

169 Ibid., 67.

170 Ibid., 135n7; cf. 195. Wiessner contends that B originated in Karka de Ledan or its vicinity (southeast of Seleucia-Ctesiphon) in the province of Beth Huzaye.

171 חגר, 'gird, gird on, gird oneself' (= ܚܓܪ): 2 Sam. 3:31; Isa. 15:3, 22:12; Jer. 4:8, 6:26, 49:3; Lam.

is respectively said: וְשַׂק וָאֵפֶר יֻצַּע (Peshitta: ܠܗ ܐܪܡܐ ܘܩܛܡܐ ܣܩܐ) and: שַׂק וָאֵפֶר יֻצַּע לָרַבִּים (Peshitta: ܣܩܐ ܘܩܛܡܐ ܡܪܡܐ ܠܣܓܝܐܐ). The *communis opinio* among scholars seems to be that these Hebrew phrases express a 'spreading under' or a 'laying in' sackcloth and ashes.[172] This position is sustained by the LXX wherein these phrases are rendered with καὶ σάκκον καὶ σποδὸν ὑποστρώσῃ ("and spread under thee sackcloth and ashes") and σάκκον καὶ σποδὸν ἔστρωσαν ἑαυτοῖς ("They spread for themselves sackcloth and ashes"). Especially the Greek translation of Isa. 58:5 makes clear that the translator did not understand (the hiph. of) יצע as meaning 'to put on …', but 'to spread under …'.[173] It seems then, assuming a careful rendering of the Hebrew,[174] that the phrase ܡܪܡܐ ܣܩܐ in the Peshitta does not express the sackcloth being 'put on'—for which other verbs are employed[175]—but 'spread out on the ground'.[176]

This picture is confirmed by a highly informative passage from the story of Guhštāzād in *The Testimony of Mār Šemʿōn Barṣabāʿē and his companions*. We

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2:10; Ezek. 7:18, 27:31; Joel 1:13. חגר (= ܐܣܪ): 1 Ki. 20:32. יצע, 'lay, spread' (= ܡܪܡܐ): Est. 4:3; Isa. 58:5. כסה, 'cover' (= ܟܣܐ): 2 Ki. 19:1, 2; 1 Ch. 21:16; Isa. 37:1, 2; Jona 3:8. לבשׁ, 'put on, wear, clothe, be clothed' (= ܠܒܫ): Jona 3:5. לבשׁ (= ܠܒܫ): Est. 4:1. נטה, 'stretch out, spread out, extend' (= ܦܪܣ): 2 Sam. 21:10. פתח, pi 'loose, ungird' (= ܫܪܐ): Psa. 30:12; Isa. 20:2. שׂים, 'put, place, set' (= ܐܪܡܝ): Gen. 37:34; 1 Ki. 20:31. שׂים (= ܣܡ): 1 Ki. 21:27. שׁכב, 'lie down' (= ܕܡܟ): 1 Ki. 21:27. תפר, 'sew together' (= ܚܛ): Job 16:15. The usual noun for 'garment' (of sackcloth) is לְבוּשׁ (= ܠܒܘܫ, ܠܒܫܐ): Est. 4:2; Psa. 35:13, 69:12. In the Syriac New Testament, ܡܪܡܐ never refers to sackcloth and is only used in a figurative sense (see e.g. Matt. 21:5).

172 As may be inferred from the unanimity among the many commentaries and Bible translations. See e.g. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 837: "Or one in which he spreads sackcloth and ashes?" and Bush, *Ruth/Esther*, 389: "… while many made their beds on sackcloth and ashes." Concerning the versions, the ESV e.g. translates: "… and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?" (Isa. 58:5) and "… and many of them lay in sackcloth and ashes." (Est. 4:3). The only two other occurrences of יצע in the Old Testament—one of which the Peshitta renders again with ܡܪܡܐ—confirm that the verb expresses a downward movement, a 'spreading under', or a 'spreading on the ground': "If I make my bed (וְאַצִּיעָה/ܐܣܡܐ) in Sheol, you are there!" (Psa. 139:8; LXX: ἐὰν καταβῶ εἰς τὸν ᾅδην πάρει—"if I should go down to hell, thou art present") and "… maggots are laid as a bed (יֻצַּע/ܢܬܕܡܟ) beneath you …" (Isa. 14:11; LXX: ὑποκάτω σου στρώσουσιν σῆψιν—"… under thee they shall spread corruption …").

173 The verb ὑποστρώννυμι means 'to spread under oneself', see Lust, Eynikel & Hauspie, *Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 638a.

174 Ter Haar Romeny & Morrison, "Peshitta," 329a maintain that "the Old Testament Peshitta is a prime witness to the strength and quality of the Jewish tradition since the 2nd cent.", since "the Hebrew model of the Peshitta must have been nearly identical with the so-called Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible".

175 See foornote 171 above.

176 Cf. Lamsa's translation of Isa. 58:5 and Est. 4:3 (*Holy Bible*, 748a; 553a).

are told that after Guhštāzād gave in to pressure from the king to worship the Sun-god and was rebuked by Šemʿōn—the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon—he did penance for his behaviour. It is said that:

ܘܐܙܠ ܠܒܝܬܗ ܘܩܕܡ ܡܠ ܥܠ ܣܩܐ ܘܗܘܐ ܪܡܐ ܩܛܡܐ ܥܠܘܗܝ: ܘܥܠ ܣܩܐ ܘܩܛܡܐ ܗܘܘ ܥܪܣܗ ܘܐܬܝܪ: ܘܫܡܥ ܥܠ ܗܘܐ ܐܒܠܐ ܫܪܐ: [...] ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܗܘܐ ܩܐܡ ܡܢ ܣܩܗ ܘܐܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܕܪܬܐ:

He went to his house, spread out sackcloth (for himself), poured ashes on it, made his bed on sackcloth and ashes, sat down on it and mourned (lit: sorrow laid hold of him) [...] he rose from his sackcloth and went to the palace ...[177]

Because it is explicitly mentioned that Guhštāzād made his bed on the sack-cloth, sat down on it and (after three days) rose again from the sackcloth, there is no doubt here that ܩܕܡ ܥܠ ܣܩܐ means that the sackcloth is spread out on the ground.[178]

Since we now have clear examples in which ܩܕܡ with ܣܩܐ has the mean-ing of 'to spread out on the ground' and not 'to put on' or 'spread upon the body', it seems acceptable to conclude that the phrase may have the same mean-ing in Narsai's homily. This sustains Quasten's position, against Connolly's and Smith's, that the sackcloth is employed in Narsai's rite in a similar way as in Theodore's. Whether the sackcloth is used in exactly the same way in both rituals is not easy to establish, however. In Narsai's account, the phrase "[h]e spreads sackcloth" follows the remark that the candidate "bends his knees and bows his head".[179] If we take this chronologically, the spreading of sackcloth succeeds the kneeling. In that case the novice first kneels, spreads sackcloth before him and then takes place on the sackcloth, still in a kneeling posture. It does not seem to do any violence to the text, however, if we take the spreading of sackcloth as simultaneous with the kneeling. This yields the less wooden pic-ture of the catechumen spreading sackcloth and kneeling on it in one and the

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177 For the reference to this passage I am indebted to Sokoloff, 759a. Syriac text: Bedjan, *Acta martyrum*, 158:3–6, 17; Syriac text and Latin translation: Kmosko, *Simeon bar Sabbaʿe*, 841,34:1–4; 842,35:21–22. The English translation is my own. Cf. the German translation of Braun, *Persischer Märtyrer*, 24,15: "Er ging in sein Haus, breitete einen Sack aus, streute Asche darauf, breitete sein Lager auf Sack und Asche, setzte sich darauf und trauerte ... stand er von seinem Sack auf und kam an den Hof ...".

178 The datives ethicus ܠ does not affect the meaning.

179 22,363:14 (*s* :8).

same movement. The reason for Narsai to first mention the kneeling may then be that the kneeling is the main action. Although we cannot possibly be certain, the latter approach seems the more promising. But one way or the other, it seems that, unlike Theodore's, Narsai's candidate does not already stand on the sackcloth before he kneels on it.

In the above, I already mentioned that the candidate is 'naked'. This 'nakedness' is described as "naked without covering" (ܚܣܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܬܟܣܝܬܐ),[180] "naked ... and stripped" (ܚܣܝܐ ܕܡܬܦܪܣ ܘܡܫܠܚ),[181] and "without covering" (ܕܠܐ ܬܟܣܝܬܐ).[182] Although the baptizands may have been baptised stark naked,[183] the term 'naked' as such does not necessarily refer to a state of stark nudity.[184] In fact, Narsai seems to qualify the 'nakedness' by the addition of "without covering" (ܕܠܐ ܬܟܣܝܬܐ). As we have established above, ܬܟܣܝܬܐ most probably refers to the outer garment.[185] We may safely conclude, then, that Narsai's baptismal candidate was not completely naked during the present ritual, but 'naked' in the sense of 'without outer garment'. This harmonises with the place of the Lawsuit within the structure of the overall rite. Although we must be careful not to impose our modern-day expectations on antiquity, it seems odd for the catechumen to be naked from the Lawsuit onwards, i.e. during almost the whole rite! Moreover, as the only ritual that requires stark nudity, baptism, is separated from the Lawsuit by the *syntaxis*, the testimony of the sponsor, the enrolment, and the anointing of the head, there is no practical reason why the initiand should already be completely undressed so early in the rite.

4.2.2   *Function and Meaning of the Ritual*

Although probably not describing the actual ritual, as established above,[186] the candidate's petition at the beginning of the Lawsuit reveals much of its function, which is to deliver the baptizand from Satan's slavery and to reconcile him

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180   22,362:7 (*s* :5).
181   22,363:10 (*s* :5–6).
182   22,363:12 (*s* :7).
183   See p. 320.
184   Which is rightly observed by Guy, "Naked Baptism," 138 (cf. Harkins, 220n31; Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 107). However, I do not consent with his thesis that stark nudity during baptism itself was the exception and not the rule. See p. 295 f. for a more elaborate discussion of baptismal nakedness and especially footnote 16 for my critique on Guy (for a more balanced viewpoint, see Jensen, *Living Water*, 158–166).
185   See p. 138n62 above.
186   See p. 157.

again with his Creator.[187] Narsai's theological stance concerning Satan's 'legal' right over man—presupposed in his baptismal homilies—becomes clear in a passage from his homily *On the Resurrection*, and has some interesting parallels with Theodore's *mythos* of the Lawsuit:[188]

> For a short time, he [Christ, NW] drove away the treacherous one with whom he battled, so that (Satan) might go (and) devise schemes of death under the guise of his (law)suit. He [Satan, NW] continually knew that in a legal way he will enter a suit and by recalling former (things) seek to conquer. The transgression of (God's) command in Paradise he kept recalling, and upon (this) offense as evidence he was relying. With (Adam's) desire for fruit as (his) surety, he continually brought forth the charge that this had become his surety because of the slavery over men that he had acquired by (Adam's) eating. The signature of Eve and Adam he kept showing him, (saying:) 'Behold! Your parents have sealed and delivered (this) over. Read and understand (it). A bond Adam wrote me in Eden, because he succumbed to sin; and because he did not repay it, he pledged his sons as interest. From the beginning, I have possessed authority over mortals; and it was not in secret (that) they enrolled (themselves) and became enslaved as debtors ...'.[189]

The transgression of Adam and Eve is portrayed as a legal and wilful covenant with Satan here, by which the latter gained authority over man. It is important to remind ourselves that in Narsai's rite the Lawsuit follows the renunciation of the Devil. But although the candidate is able to renounce Satan while still being his captive, the renunciation itself does not deliver him from evil dominion. Such is only achieved by the authority of the Judge, based upon the baptizand's repentance. This reveals a certain logic that becomes further enlightened by Narsai's application of the biblical parable of the prodigal son. After the initiand's plea, Narsai explains:

> These words the wanderer puts together on the day of his return, after the manner of the story of the younger son. For his sake were the parables enacted; and it is right that he should frame his words according to those that are written. He it is of whom it is written that he strayed and went forth, and turned and came (back); and the day of his going forth

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187   22,362:10–20; *s* :6–12.
188   1,27:26–28:14; and see the discussion on p. 141 f.
189   McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, IV, 41–54.

and of his repentance is inscribed in the Gospel. To-day comes to pass in truth that which is written; and abundant mercies go forth to meet him and receive him. At his repentance the heavenly assemblies[190] are rejoicing; and they are escorting him as a dead man that has returned to life.[191]

In my paper "Critical Comparison", I have shown that Narsai uses the parable of the younger son as a baptismal narrative.[192] Or, as Narsai puts it, the parable becomes 'enacted' (ܚܒܪ ܡܘܚܒܢܐ)[193] by means of the liturgy. Based upon his allegorical exegesis, Narsai is able to relate "the whole spectrum of the parable to the baptismal rite".[194] Key elements of the parable have their liturgical pendant: the robe (baptism), the fatted ox (Eucharist), and the ring (the seal of the Spirit?).[195] And although Narsai does not explicitly identify the citizen with whom the younger son made an agreement to feed the swine, there is little doubt that this individual fulfils the role of the Devil.[196] In this way, the basic pattern of the rite mirrors that of the biblical narrative: like the younger son, the candidate first rejects his former master (*apotaxis*) and then repents (lawsuit).

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190   These "heavenly assemblies" (ܟܢܫܐ ܪܫܡܝܢܐ *s* 22,362:18) most probably are the angels (cf. 21,348:9 (*s* :5) and 21,348:14 (*s* :8) where Narsai uses the synonyms 'heavenly ones' (ܫܡܝܢܐ) and 'watchers' (ܥܝܪܐ)). The joy of the angels over the repentance of a sinner is mentioned within the context of the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:10 (cf. v. 7), although it is not part of the parable itself. Also Ephrem mentions the rejoicing of the Watchers over the return of the lost within the context of baptism (*Virg.* 7.8; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 191). So, Narsai seems to present a biblically-based traditional view here. Yet, there are strong indications that the explicit mentioning of the angels with reference to man's salvation here and in other places (see the refs. above) has special significance for Narsai. According to Narsai's anthropology, man is 'the bond of the universe' (McLeod, "Image of God," esp. 460, 461, 465; McLeod, *Soteriology of Narsai* (2), esp. 12, 19; Gignoux, *Sur la création*, I, 149–156; IV, 274–283; Frishman, *Divine Economy*, Part 2, I, 11–26; 39–40). Composed of soul and body, man is akin to the spiritual (angelic) as well as to the corporeal world and so unites by and in himself both worlds with God. It follows by consequence that man's fall disturbed the harmony of creation and particularly its relationship with the Creator. Within this theological framework, it comes as no surprise that the restoration of man invokes the joy of both worlds as it implies the refurbishment of their relationship with God. Against this backdrop it seems likely that the angels mentioned in the phrase under consideration are no passers-by, but witnesses of Narsai's theology.

191   22,362:21–31; *s* :12–19.

192   Witkamp, "Critical Comparison," 536–540.

193   22,362:23; *s* :14.

194   Witkamp, "Critical Comparison," 538.

195   Ibid., 539.

196   Ibid., 539–540.

The candidate is said to model his penance on the example of the Prodigal Son. He would even frame his words "according to those that are written". But at first sight there seems to be a tension between the biblical narrative and Narsai's application. The Prodigal Son petitions his father: "I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."[197] Not only is this plea much shorter than the candidate's, it is also more modest and the focus is different. Contrary to the biblical archetype, the initiand appeals to his special position ("Thy servant"; "son of Thy handmaid"; "Thine I am") and, most importantly, is mainly concerned about his deliverance from Satan's power. These different horizons can only be bridged by Narsai's own typical understanding of the parable. In his homily on the parable of the prodigal son, Narsai interprets the agreement between the younger son and the citizen, who sent him to the swine, as a type of the legal agreement between a sinner and Satan.[198] The introduction of this legal aspect provides a potential for developing the idea of a lawsuit and so makes the parable fit for mystagogical application. For although the general atmosphere of the Lawsuit is penitential, its focus lies on the change of lordship. As such, the Lawsuit—closely connected with the directly surrounding rituals of the *apotaxis* and *syntaxis*—ritualises an important theological idea underlying every rite of Christian initiation: the transfer of the initiand from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of Christ.[199]

The *mythos* of the Lawsuit (and the whole rite) is not discussed by Narsai in the present context but in homily 21 and is worth quoting in full here:

> The devils had wickedly plundered the inheritance of men; and there arose one Man, and He pleaded the cause and convicted them. Just judgment He pleaded with the deceitful ones, and snatched from them the spoil which they had robbed from the house of His Father. By Adam did the Deceiver, who sows error in the world, lead (men) astray; and a Son of Adam was jealous and avenged the wrong of all His race. Great jealousy did He put on in wrath for the sake of His fathers; and He consented to die, that they should not be styled slaves of the evil ones. As an athlete He went down to the contest on behalf of His people; and He joined

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197   Luke 15:19.

198   Siman, "Enfant prodigue," verses 55 and 58; cf. 43 ff. Although this notion is not explicitly present in the biblical narrative, it may be implied. Luke 15:15 tells us: καὶ πορευθεὶς ἐκολλήθη ἑνὶ τῶν πολιτῶν τῆς χώρας ἐκείνης. The verb κολλάω—as well as its Syriac counterpart ܢܩܦ—may express a close, even intimate (sexual, marital), relationship (*BDAG*, 555b–556a; Payne Smith, 351b–352a; cf. Matt. 19:5; 10:28; Rom. 12:9; 1 Cor. 6:16–17) and harmonises with the idea of a mutual (legal) agreement between both parties.

199   Cf. Col. 1:13.

battle with Satan, and vanquished and conquered him. On the summit of
Golgotha He fought with the slayer of men, and He made him a laughing-
stock before angels and men. With the spear of the wood He overthrew
him, and cast him down from his confidence: with that whereby he had
hoped that death should enter in he was smitten and pierced. Over the
death of men the arrogant-minded was boasting; and by the death of one
Man his boasting came to naught. One Man died on the cross on behalf
of mortals: and He taught them to travel by the way of His death and His
life.[200]

This *mythos* forms the necessary foundation of the ritual itself (the *drama*)
wherein it finds its liturgical expression and which Narsai describes as a court-
room scene. Before God, the Judge, the baptizand pleads deliverance from
his subjection to Satan.[201] As he is not able to fight the Devil on his own, he
is assisted by an 'advocate' (the bishop), who "accuses the devil on behalf of
sinners."[202] In order to move the Judge to compassion, the *competens* genu-
flects, spreads sackcloth and asks for mercy. According to Narsai, the candidate
depicts two things by his kneeling: "one, his fall, and one, that he is making
payment as a debtor."[203] Narsai continues: "[t]hat fall which was in Paradise
he now recalls; and he pleads a judgment with Satan who led astray his father
(*sc.* Adam)."[204] The latter phrase first of all qualifies the candidate's 'fall', which
does not only concern his personal transgression, but the drama of mankind
as a whole. In this way, the initiand identifies himself with the story of human-
ity; salvation history becomes his own. The earlier mentioned parallel between
the baptizand and the younger son of the parable seems to further enhance this
identification. As the Prodigal Son returns to his father only after he had wil-
fully left him, he not only typifies the single sinner but, even more, portrays the

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200   21,348:18–38; *s* :11–23. As Kappes, "Voice of Many Waters," 542–543 has rightly observed,
       Narsai—in his account on baptism—never speaks of 'Jesus Christ' or 'Jesus' and uses
       'Christ' only once (22,358:18; *s* :11). Kappes maintains that this phenomenon is caused
       by Narsai's effort to adapt his message to the Zoroastrian context of the new Christians.
       Although this may be one contributing factor, it is my impression that more research is
       needed here, especially because a quick scan discloses that the same phenomenon is also
       present in other homilies of Narsai. To what extent may this be invoked by Narsai's Chris-
       tology?
201   "By means of his petition he frames an indictment against his captor, and convicts him
       out of the law of God." (22,362:38–39).
202   22,363:6–7.
203   22,363:19.
204   22,363:20–22.

back and forth movement of humanity in Adam and Christ. Against this background, it seems likely that the second meaning of the kneeling, the "making payment as a debtor", must also be understood from the novice's identification with Adam and so positions the neophyte's penance within the collective framework of salvation history. His ancestor's fall is his fall, his ancestor's guilt is his guilt.

The sackcloth and the downward look of the candidate further amplify the ritual drama. Although Narsai does not elaborate on the meaning of the sackcloth, we are on safe ground in seeing the sackcloth as the common symbol of sin and penance. Narsai assigns a twofold meaning to the bending of the head: it expresses the baptizand's shame towards the Judge,[205] and his fear of Satan.[206] Taken together, the whole scene pictures the miserable state of the initiand, being completely dependent on the Judge's verdict. Fortunately, the adjudication of the Judge is founded upon Christ's final victory over Satan and the candidate receives forgiveness and "takes heart".[207] The truth of Christ's victory over Satan has now been personally appropriated by the novice.

4.3 The Rituals Contextualised

In the Great Church, the ritual of baptismal exorcism probably developed in the third century.[208] Our earliest witnesses of the practice are the *Apostolic Tradition*[209] and a council of Carthage (256).[210] By the time of Augustine, "the practice of prebaptismal exorcism had long since become established not only in Africa but everywhere in the West".[211] This was certainly not the case in the Levant where we encounter a more diverse picture. In fact, in this area the pre-baptismal exorcism appears only in the fourth century and then mainly

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205   22,363:14–15.

206   22,363:22–23.

207   22,363:23–24.

208   The earliest evidence of pre-baptismal exorcism is found in Valentinian gnostic circles (mid-second cent.) as witnessed by Clement of Alexandria's *Excerpta ex Theodoto* (Leeper, "From Alexandria to Rome"; cf. Mazza, "Influence of Anthropology," 205–210).

209   Pre-baptismal exorcisms are described in 20.3 and 20.8. Yet, the *daily* exorcisms mentioned in 20.3 may reflect a later development (Bradshaw, Johnson & Philips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 109). It is noteworthy, furthermore, that the Ethiopic version of 20.8 is much shorter than the Sahidic and the Arabic and may reflect an earlier stratum of the text (Bradshaw, Johnson & Philips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 111).

210   Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 109.

211   Ibid., 112. But not *daily* exorcisms during the time of preparation, see n209 above.

on the West Syrian coastline of the Mediterranean.[212] Witnesses in this area, besides Theodore, are John Chrysostom, the *Testamentum Domini*, and the rite of Jerusalem. The only East Syrian source which testifies of an exorcism-like rite is *AR*.

According to Chrysostom's *Baptismal Instructions*, catechesis and exorcism started ten days after enrolment, that is thirty days before baptism.[213] During the main part of this period the candidates were exorcised daily after instruction.[214] As already discussed above, the rituals were probably performed by ordained exorcists.[215] During the exorcisms, the candidate stood in a praying posture similar to that described by Theodore, i.e. without his outer garment, barefoot, with his arms outstretched and the palms of his hands turned upwards.[216] Like Theodore and with a similar reference to Isa. 20:3, Chrysostom interprets the 'naked' and barefoot state of the initiand as a sign of captivity.[217] The main purpose of the exorcisms—together with the instructions[218]—is to cleanse the baptizand's mind and heart from the evil influence of demons and prepare his heart for the indwelling of Christ.[219] Such a purification is necessary as "the catechumen is a sheep without a seal; he is a deserted inn and a hostel without a door, which lies open to all without distinction; he is a lair for robbers, a refuge for wild beasts, a dwelling place for demons".[220] Similar to Theodore, Chrysostom witnesses a collective kneeling introducing the *apotaxis/syntaxis*.[221] Also in line with Theodore, the kneeling position has a double meaning: it reminds the candidates of their former servitude to Satan[222] and simultaneously expresses their servitude to God (with a similar refer-

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212   For a discussion of the early non-exorcistic and later exorcistic traditions in Syria, see Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 123–157.

213   Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 59 ff. See also Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 141–144 for a discussion of exorcism in Chrysostom's *Baptismal Catecheses*.

214   *Stav*. 2.12; ed. Kaczynski, II, 342 (= 3/2,12); tr. Harkins, 47. According to Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 74 the instructions were connected to the evening celebration of the Eucharist. But see the reservations of Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 51n6.

215   See p. 131–132.

216   *Stav*. 2.14, *PK* 1.11, *PK* 2.14; ed. Kaczynski, II, 342 (= 3/2,12), 160 (= 2/1,7), 210 (= 2/2,6); tr. Harkins, 48, 135, 210.

217   *PK* 2.14; ed. Kaczynski, I, 210, 212 (= 2/2,6); tr. Harkins, 153–154.

218   *PK* 2.16; ed. Kaczynski, I, 214 (= 2/2,7); tr. Harkins, 155.

219   *Stav*. 2.12, *PK* 2.16; ed. Kaczynski, II, 340 and 342 (= 3/2,12), 212 and 214 (= 2/2,7); tr. Harkins, 47–48, 154–155. Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 81–83.

220   *PK* 2.16; ed. Kaczynski, I, 214 (= 2/2,7); tr. Harkins, 155. Cf. *PK*. 2.17.

221   *PK* 3.21–22, *Stav*. 2.18; ed. Kaczynski, I, 240, 242 (= 2/3,4), 348 (=3/2,18); tr. Harkins, 167, 50.

222   *Stav*. 2.18; ed. Kaczynski, II, 348 (=3/2,18); tr. Harkins, 50.

ence to Phil. 2).[223] As it is a prayer of thanksgiving, however, its aim is different. Chrysostom portrays God as a Judge who justifies man in the face of Satan's accusations. Yet, the idea is less developed than in Theodore and Narsai; Chrysostom mainly pictures God as a Judge of athletes in the arena instead of a court of law.[224]

In Jerusalem too, the baptizands were exorcised daily during the Lenten fast.[225] This time, however, the exorcisms preceded the daily instructions and lasted for seven weeks in the time of Egeria.[226] From Cyril's remark that the candidates had to wait "for the others to arrive for their exorcism"[227] we may infer that the catechumens were not all exorcised simultaneously, but individually or in small groups. Some distinctive features of the actual ritual were that the baptizand was veiled and breathed upon.[228] In order to clarify the purpose of the exorcisms, Cyril uses the image of the purification of impure gold. As the gold is purged by fire and air, so the soul of the initiand is cleansed by exorcism and fear. With the departure of the demon (= Devil) and the purification of sins, the whole process results in the pure gold of the soul's salvation.[229] *MC* mentions that, directly before baptism, the candidate was anointed all over his body with 'exorcised oil' (ἐλαίῳ ... ἐπορκιστῷ)[230] "to burn away the traces of sin and even repel the hidden powers of the evil one".[231] The function of this anointing is clearly apotropaic and not really exorcistic.

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223   *PK* 3.21–22; ed. Kaczynski, I, 240, 242 (= 2/3,4); tr. Harkins, 167.

224   *MF* 2.34–36; ed. Kaczynski, I, 130, 132 (=1,12); tr. Harkins, 183–184. Cf. Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 116.

225   *It.* 46.1; ed. Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 296; tr. Wilkinson, 162. *MC* does not contain any reference to the exorcisms. Cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 48. For a general discussion of the exorcisms in Jerusalem, see Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 145–146.

226   That is, the first seven weeks of an eight-week Lent, see *It.* 46.1, 4; ed. Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 296, 298; tr. Wilkinson, 162. The relation between Egeria's 'daily instructions' and Cyril's eighteen pre-baptismal lectures is a matter of debate. See Johnson, "Reconciling Cyril and Egeria" (cf. his "From Three Weeks to Forty Days"), who surveys the different positions and proposes his own approach. He contends that during the fourth century the period of Lent developed from three to eight weeks and that Cyril's lectures reflect the earlier stadium. (It is possible that in Cyril's time Lent lasted "forty days", see *Cats.* 1.5 and *Procat.* 4)

227   *Procat.* 14; ed. Cross, 9; tr. Yarnold, 84.

228   *Procat.* 9; Cross, 5; tr. Yarnold, 82. It is possible that the candidates were also signed with the cross on their forehead to frighten the demons (see Harkins, "Pre-baptismal Rites," 225–226; *Baptismal Instructions*, 218). However, the few references to this practice (*Cats.* 4.13, 13.3 and 22) do not concern the rite of initiation but the circumstances of everyday life.

229   *Procat.* 9; Cross, 5–6; tr. Yarnold, 82.

230   *MC* 2.3; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 112; tr. Yarnold, 173.

231   *MC* 2.3; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 114; tr. Yarnold, 174.

Although Kelly may be right that neither Chrysostom nor Cyril really be‑
lieved that they were expelling demons,[232] it is worth noting that, of the two,
Chrysostom's wording and terminology stays the closest to the original idea
when he calls the catechumen "a dwelling place of demons"[233] and speaks of
fierce and cruel demons who must withdraw from the heart.[234] Yet, the overall
picture drawn from both Chrysostom and Cyril seems to be that, although the
candidates were not demon-possessed, they still were vulnerable to the attacks
and negative influence of a reality of evil forces and therefore in need of some
'housecleaning' in preparation for the following rituals.

The *Testamentum Domini* shows a similar pattern of daily exorcism dur‑
ing the final stage of preparation as witnessed by Chrysostom and the rite
of Jerusalem.[235] In affiliation with Chrysostom the *electi* were exorcised daily
after instruction.[236] After these series of exorcisms, each candidate was exor‑
cised individually by the bishop himself to find out if he was pure.[237] How‑
ever, "if it happens that he is not pure, or he has an impure spirit (ܪܘܚܐ
ܛܡܐܬܐ), let him [i.e. the catechumen] be convicted by that impure spirit
(ܪܘܚܐ ܛܡܐܬܐ)".[238] Such a person had to be led away from the others and be
rebuked "because he has not faithfully heard the words of the commandments
and of the admonition, because of his remaining in an evil and alien spirit
(ܪܘܚܐ ܒܝܫܬܐ ܘܢܘܟܪܝܬܐ)".[239] A final collective exorcism took place on the
Saturday (evening) shortly before baptism. While all catechumens remained
silent and in a kneeling position, the bishop exorcised them by a lengthy 'for‑
mula', which also contains the following illustrative passage:

> Lord God almighty, I adjure these [people] by your Name, and [the name
> of] your beloved Son Jesus Christ. Drive out from the souls of these
> your servants all disease and illness, and every stumbling-block and all
> unbelief, all doubt and all contempt, every unclean spirit (ܟܠ ܪܘܚܐ
> ܛܡܐܬܐ) working [in them]: dumb, a murderer under the earth; fiery,
> dark, putrid smelling; incantational, desirous, gold-loving, proud, money-
> loving, wrathful.[240]

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232   Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 146.
233   *PK* 2.16; ed. Kaczynski, I, 214 (= 2/2,7); tr. Harkins, 155.
234   *Stav.* 2.12; ed. Kaczynski, II, 342 (=3/2,18); tr. Harkins, 48.
235   Cf. Kelly 139–141.
236   *TD* II.6; ed. Rahmani, 120, lines 3–4; tr. Sperry-White, 24.
237   Ibid., lines 5–6.
238   Ibid., lines 6–8.
239   Ibid., lines 10–11.
240   *TD* II.7; ed. Rahmani, 122, line 29–124, line 4; tr. Sperry-White, 26.

While the bishop speaks, it may happen that someone suddenly stands up "and weeps or cries out or foams at the mouth or gnashes his teeth, or gazes harshly, or is greatly lifted-up, or completely flees, being greatly carried off".[241] Such a person must be taken away by the deacons and "be exorcized by the priests until he is purified".[242] By breathing on the initiands and signing them between their eyes, on their noses, on their hearts, and on their ears, the pontiff concluded the ritual.[243] The general aim of the exorcisms is to cleanse the baptizands from every evil thought, desire, and practice in order to make room for the fruits of faith.[244] Directly before baptism the bishop anoints the catechumen with exorcised oil, saying: "I anoint [with] this oil of exorcism for deliverance from every evil and unclean spirit (ܪܘܚܐ ܒܝܫܬܐ ܘܛܡܐܬܐ), and for deliverance from every evil."[245] Although it may be debated whether the candidates are really considered 'demon-possessed' by the *Testamentum*, it leaves no doubt that the un-baptised is heavily influenced and attacked by evil spirits, which must be 'driven out' by several stages of exorcisms. Of all the Syro-Palestiniane sources the *Testamentum* is probably the most 'exorcistic' in the literal sense of the word.

A final source we will consider is the East Syrian anonymous rite of *AR*. After the renunciation of Satan and the confession of Christ, the 'exorcism' is described as:

> The adjuration[246] (is) the battle with Satan and a supplication to the judge on behalf of him who seeks to be freed from evil dominion.[247]

Although manuscript A labels this ritual as an 'adjuration' or 'exorcism', there seems nothing really exorcistic about it. The candidate is not 'possessed', but under evil dominion. Liberation from this atrocious state is achieved by others (priests?) who make a supplication to the judge (God) on behalf of the oppressed initiand.

When we put the rites of Theodore and Narsai in the above sketched context, we get the following picture. Theodore and Narsai attest an 'exorcism' which is

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241   *TD* II.7; ed. Rahmani, 124, lines 21–23; tr. Sperry-White, 26–27.

242   Ibid., lines 23–26.

243   *TD* II.7; ed. Rahmani, 124, line 27–126, line 2; tr. Sperry-White, 27.

244   *TD* II.7; ed. Rahmani, 124, line 10–12; tr. Sperry-White, 26.

245   *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, lines 7–8; tr. Sperry-White, 28.

246   ܡܘܡܬܐ (= A) = 'adjuration', or 'exorcism'. R reads 'baptism' (ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ). See Brock, "Commentaries," 34–35.

247   *AR* 4; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries", 34–35.

less exorcistic than the other witnesses from Syro-Palestine (except from *AR*). Although the 'exorcisms' of Theodore and Narsai have the deliverance from Satan's evil dominion in view, there is no question of expelling demons, not even ostensibly. In neither case are there 'exorcisms' that pursue the purification and preparation of the heart for the indwelling of Christ, as in Cyril and Chrysostom, but instead both rites deal with the clarification of the legal status of the candidate by means of a 'lawsuit'. Furthermore, it is worth noting that neither Theodore nor Narsai witnesses the praxis of daily exorcisms during a (longer) period of instruction. In Theodore's rite the period of exorcism is compressed into several days and may begin only after the deliverance of the final baptismal homily, while Narsai vouches for an even closer integration of the 'exorcism' into the baptismal rite between *apotaxis* and *syntaxis*. And although the posture of the candidate as described by Theodore and Narsai is not unique, the particular use of sackcloth in both is worth noting. So it seems, then, that from all Syro-Palestinian rites it is Theodore's which Narsai has the most affinity with. At the same time we cannot ignore the fact that some peculiar features of Narsai's ritual, such as its juridical character, are also witnessed by the East Syrian *AR*. In what way this contributes to our understanding of the dependency of Narsai on Theodore is one of the interests of the next section.

4.4   The Rituals Compared

The different position of the 'exorcism' in the rites of Theodore and Narsai reveals a different ritual 'logic'. Theodore's exorcism fulfils a double purpose: it effectuates the preceding enrolment and vouches for the success of the renunciation. The initiand first needs to be delivered from Satan's dominion in order to be able to renounce the Tyrant by his own words. Narsai's rite does not have any such prerequisite.[248] In harmony with the pattern of the parable of the prodigal son, the candidate first rejects Satan and only afterwards becomes delivered from his evil dominion. By applying the Prodigal Son as an archetype, Narsai further amplifies the already dramatised portrayal of the baptizand's return to his Creator.

Most remarkably, Narsai's Lawsuit encompasses ritual acts which in Theodore's rite are distributed over two different rituals, viz. the exorcism and the penitential prayer preceding the *apotaxis-syntaxis*. If Narsai is mainly depen-

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248   Which might betray a different view concerning nature and range of Satan's power over mankind. Cf. Witkamp, "Critical Comparison," 536–542.

dent on Theodore here, his ritual would be a deliberate combination of Theodore's sub-rites. To attain this result, Narsai would have had to follow two steps. First, he would have had to leave out the intermediate rituals of the reciting of the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, two sub-rites which he did not want to integrate into his rite.[249] Second, Narsai would have had to combine the exorcism and the penitential prayer and merge them into one coherent ritual. And, not to forget, he would have had to make some additional changes to the performance of the 'exorcism', especially concerning the minister of the ritual, the posture of the candidate, and the use of sackcloth. At the same time, he would have needed not to adapt his pattern to that of Theodore but to put his 'exorcism' after the renunciation. All of this does not sound very plausible, however. It seems more likely that Narsai's pattern exorcism-prayer reflects an older tradition. The existence of such a pre-Narsai structure may be sustained by my earlier suggestion that in a previous stage of Theodore's rite the penitential prayer directly followed the exorcism part. A common pattern of exorcism-prayer would then underlie both rites with Narsai retaining its more traditional shape. The existence of common traditions in general seems to be confirmed by a document like *AR*, which shows some similarity with Theodore as well with Narsai.[250] The difference remains, however, that in Theodore the exorcism part consists of several different sessions, whereas in Narsai, as in *AR*, it comprises a single ritual. Could it be that the exorcism-part originally included multiple exorcisms—concluding the preparatory phase—and later, when the preparatory rituals became part of the baptismal rite, developed into a single ritual?

When we compare the rituals themselves, it becomes clear that the general scene is quite similar: the 'naked' catechumen first stands (in a praying posture) and remains silent while the exorcist/bishop defends his case, and then he kneels on sackcloth to make his appeal. Narsai's *explicit mention* of the silence of the candidate[251] may betray an influence of Theodore. Nevertheless, a close comparison of the rituals itself uncovers that, though similar, they are far from identical. Firstly, albeit that both present the 'exorcism' as one distinguished scene, Theodore's exorcism in reality seems to consist of different sessions spread over several days, while Narsai's Lawsuit is a single ritual. Secondly, Theodore's exorcisms are performed by multiple ordained exorcists—an exor-

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249 Narsai does, however, make mention of the (collective recitation of the) Lord's Prayer within the context of the Eucharist, see 21,354:7–21; *S* :4–12.

250 Brock, "Commentaries," 52–61.

251 Although it is likely that candidates were silent during a regular baptismal exorcism, other sources—unlike Theodore and Narsai—never explicitly touch upon the issue. Cf. Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 136.

cist per candidate—while Narsai's ritual is enacted by the bishop (assisted by the priests) who probably 'exorcised' the initiands one by one. Thirdly, although sackcloth is employed in a similar way in both rituals, its particular use seems to differ. Theodore's candidate first stands on the sackcloth during the exorcisms and then kneels down on it before offering his prayer. In Narsai's ritual, however, it seems that the initiand does not already stand on sackcloth, but only genuflects on it. It is notable that Narsai explains the twofold(!) meaning of the kneeling, but does not spend a single letter on the meaning of the sackcloth. This all makes us scepticical of a borrowing of Narsai from Theodore. Because if Narsai were leaning on Theodore here, why would he be so vague on the exact use of the sackcloth and remain completely silent on its symbolism? This does not sound like someone trying to convince his audience of the value of a new ritual, but more like someone who makes a cursory mention of a traditional element, the meaning of which is either no longer underscored by the interpreter or not important enough to elaborate upon. Fourthly, the posture of the baptizand in the act of praying differs. Theodore describes the initiand as kneeling with his upper body erect, his arms stretched towards God and looking to heaven, while Narsai's candidate is looking to the ground. Also the meaning of the kneeling differs. For Theodore, the genuflection expresses both a confession and the initiand's fall, which makes it an appropriate posture for both the *apotaxis* and the *syntaxis*. For Narsai, however, the kneeling only has a negative meaning expressing the baptizand's fall and penitence. Fifthly, the rituals have a different dynamic due to the fact that Narsai's Lawsuit is constituted of two rituals which in Theodore's rite are separated. This is most clearly seen in the bodily movements and the (suggested) participation of the candidate. While Theodore's candidate stands during the exorcisms and kneels only to make his petition some rituals later, Narsai's baptizand experiences the standing and kneeling during the same ritual. And although we cannot be sure whether it depicts reality or not, Narsai makes the suggestion of an actively participating candidate, who "pleads his cause" and "asks for mercy" during the latter part of the ritual. So, either reflecting reality or only existing in Narsai's interpretation of it, we have another example here of a different dynamic as a consequence of Narsai's Lawsuit being constituted of two rituals which are separate acts in Theodore's rite. The silence and the following active participation of the candidate, which are dispersed over the exorcism and the penitential prayer in Theodore, are part of the same context here.

Theodore and Narsai interpret the ritual as a whole in the same way: both describe the scene as a 'lawsuit' (ܕܝܢܐ) with an 'advocate' (ܣܢܐܓܪܐ) defending the initiand's case before the 'Judge' (ܕܝܢܐ). And although the level of verbal

agreement is low, some phrases are similar and there is a high degree of agreement as regards content. Some typical parallels are the following (similar terms or formulations are indicated between parentheses).

(1) The ritual's aim to deliver the candidate from his subjection to the Devil:

> N: ... that they [the priests] may set him [the candidate] free from the subjection (ܫܘܥܒܕܐ) of the Evil One who took him captive. ... free (ܚܪܪ) my life from his slavery (ܫܘܥܒܕܗ) ...[252]

> ThM: ... and so that we might be delivered for ever from his [the Devil's] servitude, and allowed to live in perfect freedom (ܚܐܪܘܬܐ) ...[253]

> ThM: ... and by a Divine verdict you receive your freedom (ܚܐܪܘܬܐ) from his [the Devil's] servitude (ܫܘܥܒܕܗ).[254]

(2) The ritual as a courtroom scene:

> N: The priests he asks (to be) as an advocate (συνήγορος) in the suit against the suit (opposed to him) (ܚܕܝܢܐ ܠܩܒܠ ܕܝܢܐ); and they plead the cause for him (ܣܢܐܓܪܘܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܦܘܗܝ) ...[255]

> N: As in a lawsuit (ܐܝܟ ܕܒܕܝܢܐ) the priest stands at the hour of the Mysteries, and accuses the devil on behalf of sinners (ܘܩܛܪܓ ܠܣܛܢܐ ܥܠ ܐܦܝ ܚܛܝܐ).[256]

> ThM: ... but it is necessary that a judgment should be given for us (ܕܢܬ ܕܝܢܐ ܚܠܦܝܢ) against the Tyrant, who is fighting the case against us ...[257]

> ThM: ... you have, in the ceremony of exorcism, a kind of law-suit (ܕܝܢܐ) with the Demon (ܐܘܟܠ ܩܪܨܐ) ...[258]

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252   22,362:5–7; *s* :4 and 22,362:15; *s* :9.
253   1,31:10–11 (1,22); *s* 159:26–160:1.
254   2,35:6–7 (2,1); *s* 164:15–16.
255   22,363:3–5; *s* :1–2. For ܐܡܪ ܕܝܢܐ cf. *s* 363:9, 13.
256   22,363:6–7; *s* :3–4.
257   1,27:21–23 (1,18); *s* 156:4–5.
258   2,35:5–6 (2,1); *s* 164:14–15.

(3) The candidate's posture as a means to move the Judge to mercy:

> N: The sinner also stands like a poor man that has been defrauded; and he begs and entreats that mercy (ܪܚܡܐ) may help him in the judgment. Naked he stands and stripped before the Judge (ܕܝܢܐ), that by his wretched plight he may win pity (ܚܢܢܐ) to cover him. [...] and then he draws near to ask for mercy (ܪܚܡܐ), making mention of his subjection to the Evil One.[259]

> ThM: And you take off your outer garment and stand barefooted in order to show in yourself the state of the cruel servitude in which you served the Devil for a long time ... Your aim in this posture is also to move the judge to mercy (ܕܝܢܐ ܠܡܪܚܡܘ ܥܠܝܟ) ...[260]

(4) The candidate's fear of looking at the Devil:

> N: He is in dread of him, therefore his face is looking upon the ground ...[261]

> ThM: and as if you were still in fear and dread of the Tyrant, not being in a position even to look at him ...[262]

The parallels with _AR_ are also worth noting. First of all, like Narsai, _AR_ portrays the ritual as a legal case before a judge (ܕܝܢܐ). Second, Narsai is familiar with the concept of what _AR_ calls a "battle with Satan" and even employs the same term 'battle' (ܩܪܒܐ).[263] Third, Narsai's "dominion of the Evil One" (ܫܘܠܛܢ ܒܝܫܐ)[264] is close to _AR_'s "evil dominion" (ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܒܝܫܐ).[265] Because of these similarities, it is understandable that Brock[266] sees _AR_ reflected in Nar-

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259   22,363:8–11; _S_ :4–6 and 22,363:16–17; _S_ :9–10.

260   1,31:37–32:5 (1,24); _S_ 160:20–23. Cf. 1,31:19, 35–37 (1,23).

261   22,363:22–23; _S_ :13.

262   1,31:27–28 (1,23); _S_ 160:12–13.

263   Several times Narsai refers to this battle between man and Satan. Twice, he uses ܩܪܒܐ ('war', 'battle'; Payne Smith, 517b), the same term as in _AR_, see 21,349:20 (_S_ :11) and 22,359:38 (_S_ :22). Other times, Narsai employs ܬܟܬܘܫܐ ('fighting', 'battle', 'war'; Payne Smith, 486b), see 22,366:27 (_S_ :16); 22,366:35 (_S_ :22); 22,367:2 (_S_ :1); 22,368:9 (_S_ :6) or ܕܪܐ ('wrestling match', 'contest'; Payne Smith, 97a), see 22,366:19 (_S_ :17). The latter term is also used with reference to Christ's battle with Satan, see 21,348:28 (_S_ :17).

264   22,359:17; _S_ 359,11.

265   It is not unlikely that Narsai changed ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܒܝܫܐ into ܫܘܠܛܢ ܒܝܫܐ to fit into his twelve syllable pattern. Cf. McLeod, _Soteriology of Narsai (1)_, 40; Brock, _Holy Spirit_, 5.

266   "Commentaries," 53.

sai here. Yet, in order to evaluate the weight of this 'reflection', we have to make some further observations. It is notable that only the first parallel—the idea of a courtroom setting—is located in Narsai within the context of the Lawsuit itself. The terms "dominion of the Evil One" (ܒܝܫܐ ܫܘܠܛܢ) and "battle" (ܩܪܒܐ) are both attested within Narsai's discussion of the *apotaxis*. Of course, the rituals of the Lawsuit and renunciation are strongly connected and it is not totally unexpected, therefore, that the different elements of *AR*'s 'exorcism' would become dispersed in Narsai; especially because Narsai's discourse is more long-winded than *AR*'s. Yet, for our present purpose it is relevant to establish that only the legal aspect of *AR*'s 'exorcism' may directly have influenced Narsai's Lawsuit as such.

So, reading Theodore, Narsai was confronted with a forensic setting he probably was already familiar with by means of *AR*,[267] and which encouraged him to further apply this concept. Nevertheless, the more specific similarity with Theodore—the mention of the candidate's silence, his fear for the Devil, the terms 'advocate' (ܣܢܐܓܪܐ) and 'lawsuit' (ܕܝܢܐ)—which is all absent from *AR*, makes it likely that Narsai drew primarily on Theodore here. Theodore's ingenious reinterpretation of the exorcisms as a lawsuit, which camouflaged the reality of different exorcistic sessions, may have stimulated Narsai to interpret his 'exorcism' as a courtroom scene. In a certain sense, then, Theodore's *interpretation* of the exorcisms as one coherent lawswuit, became *reality* in Narsai; with the difference that Narsai's penitential prayer shares in the 'legal' interpretation.[268]

Although Theodore reinterprets the exorcisms as a courtroom scene, the whole act is still denoted as an 'exorcism' performed by 'exorcists'. This jargon is not adopted by Narsai. The most obvious explanation for this is twofold. Firstly, by Theodore's portrayal of the exorcism as a lawsuit, the relationship between the older exorcistic terminology and the now reinterpreted ritual had been obscured. Therefore, Narsai could easily ignore the exorcistic terms as he did not primarily copy a 'reinterpreted exorcism' but a 'courtroom scene'. Secondly, Theodore and Narsai have a different bloodline in this respect. From Theodore's perspective the terms 'exorcism' and 'exorcist' reminded of an earlier conceptual framework. The East Syrian tradition, however, has been much more resistant to exorcistic influences.[269] For Narsai then, there was no reason to keep the exorcistic parlance as it was alien to his East Syrian heritage.

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267   *AR* and Theodore may be witnesses to a common tradition, which explains the similarities between them. See Brock, "Commentaries," 56.

268   God as 'Judge'; the candidate "pleads a judgment with Satan".

269   Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 123–157; Spinks, "Sin and the Devil".

A final observation regarding terminology is that Theodore and Narsai have a different preference concerning the terms to denote 'the Devil'. Theodore sometimes employs 'Devil' (ܐܟܠܩܪܨܐ),[270] but his most favourite term undoubtedly is 'Satan' (ܣܛܢܐ), which he uses dozens of times.[271] Yet, only within the context of the exorcisms and the penitential prayer, Theodore uses 'Satan' side by side with 'Tyrant' (ܛܪܘܢܐ),[272] the latter of which he does not employ elsewhere in his baptismal homilies. He uses 'Tyrant' exclusively to refer to the adversary as the evil suppressor who enslaved and manipulated mankind. The moment he starts discussing the *apotaxis*, except from one occasion where he refers back to the deliverance from Satan's yoke and servitude,[273] Theodore refrains from using 'Tyrant', but retains 'Satan'.[274] Narsai, however, employs 'Tyrant' (ܛܪܘܢܐ) only once, within the context of the anointing of the head.[275] Contrary to Theodore, he prefers 'Evil One' (ܒܝܫܐ)[276]—a term which Theodore in his turn uses only once[277]—to denote the devil, not only concerning the Lawsuit, but throughout both baptismal homilies. Again, it shows that Narsai employs his own particular vocabulary.

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270   1,21:15 (1,8; *s* 148:22); 1,30:5 (1,21; *s* 158:25); 1,32:2 (1,24; *s* 160:22); 2,37:30 (2,5; *s* 167:5); 2,39:27
       (2,8; *s* 169:9); 2,43:14 (2,12; *s* 173:16).
271   See e.g. 2,37:21 (2,5; *s* 166:22); 2,37:34 (2,5; *s* 167:8); 2,38:3 (2,5; *s* 167:13).
272   In the same amount of text ܛܪܘܢܐ is used twelve times and ܣܛܢܐ nineteen times. The
       twelve occurrences of ܛܪܘܢܐ are: 1,22:5 (1,9; *s* 149:20); 1,27:22 (1,18; *s* 156:4); 1,28:27 (1,19;
       s 157:13); 1,29:6 (1,20; *s* 157:26); 1,29:24 (1,20; *s* 158:12); 1,30:26 (1,22; *s* 159:15); 1,31:27 (1,24; *s*
       160:13); 1,33:7 (1,26; *s* 162:2); 2,35:19 (2,1; *s* 165:3); 2,36:10 (2,2; *s* 165:10); 2,37:8 (2,4; *s* 166:11);
       2,38:24 (2,6; *s* 168:2). ܛܪܘܢܐ is not found in the New Testament. 'Cyril' uses τύραννος in *MC*
       1.4; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 98; tr. Yarnold, 170.
273   2,38:24 (2,6; *s* 168:2).
274   2,37:18 (2,4; *s* 166:18) ff.
275   22,366:20 (*s* :13).
276   ܒܝܫܐ occurs twenty times throughout homilies 21 and 22: 22,359:13 (*s* :10); 22,359:15 (*s*
       :11); 22,359:19 (*s* :13); 22,359:20 (*s* :13); 22,359:30 (*s* :18); 22,359:31–32 (*s* :20); 22,361:12 (*s* :8);
       22,361:14 (*s* :9); 22,361:24 (*s* :16); 22,362:6 (*s* :4); 22,363:17 (*s* :10); 22,366:39 (*s* :24), 22,367:5–
       6 (*s* :3); 22,367:9 (*s* :5); 22,368:9 (*s* :7); 22,368:20 (*s* :13); 21,345:30 (*s* :18); 21,345:31 (*s* :18);
       21,352:29 (*s* :18); 21,352:30 (*s* :19). ܣܛܢܐ occurs six times: 22,359:27 (*s* :17); 22,359:37 (*s* :23);
       22,363:21 (*s* :12); 22,367:12 (*s* :7); 21,348:29 (*s* :17); 21,349:8 (*s* :5) ܐܟܠܩܪܨܐ occurs three times:
       22,361:2 (*s* :1); 22,362:31 (*s* :19); 22,363:7 (*s* :4).
277   2,41:19 (2,10; *s* 171:9). Mingana employs 'Evil One' once again in 2,42:2 (2,10; *s* 171:26), but
       there it renders ܐܟܠܩܪܨܐ.

4.5   Conclusion

A noteworthy resemblance between Theodore and Narsai concerns the portrayal of the 'exorcism' as a courtroom scene. Although the idea of a lawsuit has a broader attestation—as witnessed by *AR*—the shared combination of features not found in other sources of Syria and its vicinity, i.e. the explicit mention of the silence of the candidate and his fear of the Devil, and the use of the terms 'advocate' (ܣܢܐܓܪܐ) and 'lawsuit' (ܕܝܢܐ), may indicate that Narsai drew primarily on Theodore here.

Although the scene is quite similar, the rituals itself are far from identical. The striking differences in both position (after versus before the *apotaxis*) and structure (the (dis)connection of exorcism and penitential prayer) inevitably result in relevant differences concerning function, ritual 'logic', and dynamics of the ritual. It is of special interest that Theodore's *apotaxis* requires a previous deliverance from Satan, while Narsai's ritual—where the *apotaxis* precedes the 'exorcism'—does not have any such prerequisite. Other significant dissimilarities between the rituals concern their performance (one ritual versus several sessions), minister (bishop versus exorcist), nature (how exorcistic?), the use of the sackcloth (standing versus kneeling), and, with reference to the penitential prayer, the kneeling posture (looking down versus looking to heaven). Also worth mentioning is Narsai's particular vocabulary, especially concerning 'the Devil'.

Narsai also shows a resemblance with and some influence from *AR*. Nevertheless, although Brock may be right that *AR* is reflected in Narsai, a close reading indicates that only one element of the exorcism of *AR*, the idea of a courtroom setting, is found in Narsai within the context of the 'exorcism' itself. Again, there are no traces of naive imitation.

In conclusion, there is no compelling evidence that Narsai's ritual has been influenced by Theodore's. One of the most notable similarities, the presence of sackcloth, is better explained by an appeal to a common tradition. It is on the level of mystagogy where Theodore's influence is most clearly palpable. But even here, Narsai does not fully depend on his esteemed teacher. Instead, like a creative spider, Narsai weaves his own unique mystagogical web by critically drawing from different sources and traditions, of which Theodore is one.

Apotaxis and Syntaxis

5.1 Theodore of Mopsuestia

5.1.1 *Description and Discussion of the Rituals*

The rituals of the *apotaxis* (from ἀποτάσσομαι, 'to renounce') and *syntaxis* (from συντάσσομαι, 'to swear allegiance to') probably occurred at the Easter Vigil, although it cannot be completely excluded that they took place on Friday evening.[1] The rituals are described by Theodore as follows:

> What are then the engagements and promises which you make at that time, and through which you receive deliverance from the ancient tribulations, and participation in the future benefits?:
>
> "I abjure Satan and all his angels, and all his service, and all his *spectacle*,[2] and all his worldly *error*;[3] and I engage myself, and believe, and am baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
>
> The deacons who at that time draw near to you prepare you to recite these words.[4]

> These engagements and promises you make in the posture which we have described above,[5] while your knee is bowed to the ground both as a sign of adoration which is due from you to God, and as a manifestation of your ancient fall to the ground; the rest of your body is erect and looks upwards towards heaven, and your hands are outstretched in the guise of one who prays so that you may be seen to worship the God who is in heaven, from whom you expect to rise from your ancient fall.[6]

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1 Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 163–164; Roques, *Parrainage des adultes*, 25–27; Meyers, "Structure," 37.

2 Mingana has 'deception' here, but ܣܟܘܬܐ is better translated with 'spectacle' (Payne Smith, 589a).

3 Mingana has 'worldly glamour' here, but ܛܥܝܘܬܐ is better translated with 'error' or even 'false worship' (Payne Smith, 169b). Cf. *BS*: "seinem weltlichen Irrtum".

4 2,37:18–26 (2,4–5); *S* 2,166:18–167:1.

5 Cf. 2,43:25–27.

6 2,45:15–22 (2,16); *S* 2,175:25–176:5.

As already discussed above,[7] the *apotaxis/syntaxis* is made in the same praying posture as the preceding penitential prayer: the candidate—who is divested of his outer garment and barefooted—is kneeling with his hands outstretched and his eyes directed to heaven. And although the sackcloth is not mentioned again, it is most likely that the candidate is still kneeling on this symbol of sin. A similar posture for both the renunciation and adherence is also testified by Chrysostom.[8] Some have proposed that—in harmony with the rite of Jerusalem—the rituals of Theodore and Chrysostom included a westward orientation of the candidates for the renunciation, and, by consequence, an eastward orientation for the profession.[9] I fully agree with Riley and Day, however, that such a harmonising tendency yields "a rather cumbersome ceremonial action, given the brief formula of renunciation and commitment and the apparently large number of candidates. The candidates would first kneel, facing the West, make the renunciation, then all stand, turn to the East, kneel down again, and then make the act of commitment."[10] Riley also rightly observes that Theodore's and Chrysostom's heavenward gaze seems hard to harmonise with a meaningful westward or eastward look,[11] and, most importantly that, if these West Syrian rites indeed included a West-East orientation, it is completely inconceivable that both exposés lack any mystagogical reference to such a highly symbolic act pregnant with meaning.[12]

Theodore mentions that it is the deacons (ܡܫܡܫܢܐ)[13] who prepare the candidates to recite the formulas. The bishop is mentioned neither concerning the penitential prayer, nor with reference to the following renunciation and profession. He seems to appear on the scene only after the *syntaxis* to begin the mystery with the signing on the forehead. Yet, Theodore's remark that the bishop wears a special garment and "not his ordinary garments or the covering *with which he was covered before*"[14] seems to indicate that the pontiff was already present during the preceding rituals. Although it seems plausible,

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7   See p. 138 and 147 f.
8   *PK* 3.21–22; ed. Kaczynski, I, 240, 242 (= 2/3,4); tr. Harkins, 167; *Stav.* 2.18; ed. Kaczynski, II, 348 (= 3/2,18); tr. Harkins, 50.
9   Harkins, 224n47, see also his "Pre-Baptismal Rites," 233; Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 99, 106.
10   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 81n178. Cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 53.
11   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 81n178.
12   Ibid., 82n178. According to Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 107, 147–149, Chrysostom situates the baptismal scene in the garden of Paradise. If so, this would further diminish the plausibility of an eastward orientation during the *syntaxis* as it does not make sense to turn eastward—the direction of Paradise—when you *are* in Paradise.
13   2,37:25 (2,5); *S* 2,166:26.
14   2,45:32–33 (2,17); *S* 2,176:14. Italics mine.

then, that the bishop was present, Curtin's claim that "[i]t seems clear that he presided during the ceremony"[15] is expressed too strongly and depends, more-over, too heavily on a supposed harmony with other sources where Theodore is not explicit on the matter.[16]

The latter is also true for Curtin's thesis that the *apotaxis/syntaxis* was not a group ceremony but that the candidates made their renunciation and pro-fession individually.[17] Again, I agree with its probability, even its plausibil-ity, yet, not because Chrysostom and Pseudo-Dionysius witness the practice (while Theodore remains silent on the matter)—as Curtin argues—but pri-marily because Theodore himself seems to hint at it. During his catecheses, once he addresses the whole group of hearers in the plural, but other times he addresses the individual candidate in the singular. The enrolment is clearly an individual ritual, but discussing the exorcisms we already noticed that it is worth the effort to pay attention to the grammatical number. In this way we established that the candidates were probably exorcised simultaneously but individually.[18] When we draw this line further we see a pattern emerging. Dis-cussing the rituals of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, Theodore addresses the individual candidate in the singular.[19] But when he describes the posture for the following penitential prayer, Theodore addresses the whole group in the plural.[20] This is the more notable, not only because he had previously discussed the similar posture for the exorcisms by directing himself to the individual ini-tiand,[21] but especially since he addresses the single candidate again concerning the following *apotaxis/syntaxis*,[22] even when he recalls the baptizand that he is

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15   Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 165.

16   Ibid., 166.

17   Ibid., 167, 193–194.

18   See p. 130.

19   "… you are brought by duly appointed persons to the priest, as it is before him that you have
      to (ܗܘ ܠܟ) make (ܬܚܒܕ) your engagements and promises to God … which by a solemn
      asseveration you declare that you (ܐܢܬ) will keep steadfastly, and that you (ܐܢܬ) will
      not, like Adam, the father of our race, reject the cause of all good things, … etc." (1,33:12–24
      (1,26); *s* 1,162:4–13).

20   "You stand (ܩܐܡܬܘܢ) barefooted on sackcloth while your outer garment (ܠܒܘܫܟܘܢ)
      is taken off from you (ܡܢܟܘܢ), and your hands (ܐܝܕܝܟܘܢ ܟܕ ܦܫܝܛܢ) are stretched towards
      God in the posture of one who prays. In all this you are in the likeness (ܒܕܡܘܬܐ) of the
      posture that fits the words of exorcism … etc." (2,36:5–37:17 (2,2–4); *s* 1,165:6–166:18).

21   1,31:25–32:19 (1,23–25); *s* 1,160:10–161:8.

22   Theodore initially addresses the whole group in the plural. But after having discussed the
      first term of the formula, "I abjure Satan", he suddenly changes to the second person sin-
      gular (2,39:11 (2,7); *s* 2,168:23) and continues this until the end of the homily.

still in the same posture as during the penitential prayer.[23] It is my impression, therefore, that this phenomenon is more than just a stylistic matter and reveals whether a ritual is performed collectively or individually. That we are on safe ground here is further sustained by the observation that Theodore's exhortation to the candidates to meditate on the Creed in order to be able to recite it by heart—clearly an individual act—is made to the individual candidate.[24] This all means concretely that all rituals discussed thus far are of an individual nature,[25] with the exception of the penitential prayer which is a group ceremony. Interestingly, the credibility of such a group ceremony is supported by the rite of Chrysostom where a similar ritual is explicitly presented as a collective act.[26]

Against this background, the following more detailed picture emerges of the performance of the *apotaxis/syntaxis*. After the collective penitential prayer,[27] the initiands remain in their kneeling position on sackcloth. Several deacons approach to prepare the candidates for the following renunciation and adherence, which they will make one by one consequently. After the ceremony, the bishop, who probably presided over the ritual, leaves to appear again dressed in his special garments in order to begin the mystery with the signing.

After this portrayal of the proceedings of the rite, let us finally have a closer look at the formulas. The renunciation says:

ܩܕܡ ܐܢܐ ܐܣܛܦܠܐ ܘܟܦܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟܘܢ، ܘܟܦܪ ܐܠܟܘܟܐ، ܘܟܦܪ ܐܦܟܪܟܕܘ ܟܠܗܘ
ܟܦܟܘ ܘܟܦܪ ܐܠܟܘ ܦܠܚܢ ܒܗ ܟܠܗ ܦܠܚܘܬܐ ...

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23   2,43:25–27 (2,12); *s* 2,173:23–25 and 2,45:15–30; *s* 2,175:25–176:12.

24   1,32:22–33:3 (1,25); *s* 161:8–22.

25   In the introduction of homily 2, however, Theodore does not address the single candidate but the whole group when he mentions the rituals of the exorcism, and the recitation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer: "When you go to be enrolled (ܡܬܟܬܒܘܢ) ... etc." (2,35:4–36:4 (2,1); *s* 2,164:3–165:5). But he clearly recapitulates his previous teaching for the whole group of hearers here and does not describe the actual performance of the rituals from the perspective of the candidate as he did before. In the beginning of homily 3 Theodore does exactly the same when he summarises his teaching on the evidently individual ritual of the signing by addressing again the collective of listeners (3,48:26 ff. (3,1 ff.); *s* 3,180:5 ff.). In this way, the wording of these introductory parts of homilies 2 and 3 does not seem to conflict with my thesis.

26   *PK* 3.21–22; ed. Kaczynski, I, 240, 242 (= 2/3,4); tr. Harkins, 167. *Stav.* 2.18; ed. Kaczynski, II, 348 (=3/2,18); tr. Harkins, 50.

27   As Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 161 ff. regards the penitential prayer as a part of the *apotaxis/syntaxis* and does not sufficiently distinguish between the rituals, he—wrongly as it seems—assumes an identical ceremony for these rituals.

I abjure Satan and all his angels, and all his service, and all his spectacle, and all his worldly error …

When we compare the formulas of renunciation as given in the *synopsis* and the actual text of the second baptismal homily, we observe that the phrase "all his works" (ܘܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܥܒ̇ܕܘ̈ܗܝ)[28] is not present in the latter. Riley proposed that the absence of the phrase in the text is "presumably because Theodore does not choose to comment upon it in the *Homily* itself."[29] However, this tension is probably better explained by Leonhard's thesis that the text of the *synopsis* is a later fabric and reflects the ritual practice of the time.[30]

The formula of adherence reads:

ܘܡܫܬܘܕܐ ܐܢܐ ܘܡܗܝܡܢ ܐܢܐ ܘܥܡܕ ܐܢܐ. ܒܫܡ ܐܒܐ ܘܒܪ ܐܒܐ
ܘܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ.

… and I engage myself, and believe, and am baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Theodore's formulas have some interesting parallels with those of the *Apostolic Constitutions*:

Ἀποτάσσομαι τῷ σατανᾷ καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς πομπαῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς λατρείαις αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς ἐφευρέσεσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτόν … Καὶ συντάσσομαι τῷ Χριστῷ· καὶ πιστεύω καὶ βαπτίζομαι εἰς …[31]

I renounce Satan, and his works, and his pomps, and his angels, and his inventions, and all things that are subject to him … And I associate myself to Christ: and I believe, and am baptized into … [a Trinitarian Nicene-like Creed follows, NW].

First of all, both sets of formulas do not directly address the recipients (Satan, Christ/Trinity)—like some other Eastern sources[32]—but are phrased in an impersonal way instead. Furthermore, both formulas of adhesion have the

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28   2,35:2; *S* 2,164:1.

29   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 33n48.

30   Leonhard, "Ṣūrat ktāb", 423–424.

31   *AC* VII,41:2–4; ed. Metzger, III, 96, 98; tr. Grisbrooke, 67.

32   See p. 204and n183 below.

phrasing: "And I associate/engage myself … and I believe, and am baptised in(to) …". Next, both *syntaxes* have a creedal character with the distinction that the formula of the *Constitutions* includes a complete creed (which follows the passage quoted above), while Theodore's mentions only the Trinity. We may wonder whether Theodore's formula could be an abbreviation of a more elaborate form as testified by the *Constitutions*, or whether the wording of the *Constitutions* could be an expansion of a more sober version as found in Theodore. Stenzel affirms the latter and contends that the ritual of the *Constitutions*—an expansion of the adherence with a complete Creed—represents a younger stage in the development of the *syntaxis* in the East.[33]

When we take a closer look at the different terms used in the formulas of renunciation, we might get the impression that the term 'pomps' (ταῖς πομπαῖς) is absent from Theodore's formula. As such this would be a remarkable phenomenon, since 'pomp' (πομπή)—usually in the singular form in the Oriental formulas—is one of the most common terms in the formula of *apotaxis*. It is most interesting, however, to compare Theodore's explanation of 'worldly error' with 'Cyril's' and Chrysostom's understanding of the term 'pomp'. Theodore's 'worldly error' refers to "… the theatre, the circus, the racecourse, the contests of the athletes, the profane songs, the waterorgans, the dances …".[34] 'Cyril's' 'pomp' pertains to "… a passion for the theatre, horse-races, hunting and all other such vain pursuits …".[35] and Chrysostom speaks of "Every form of sin, spectacles of indecency (= theatre[36]), horse racing, gatherings filled with laughter and abusive language. Portents, oracles, omens, observances of times, tokens, amulets, and incantations …".[37] The latter mentioned superstitious acts are classified by Theodore—who more neatly distinguishes the different terms than Chrysostom[38]—under 'service'. Nevertheless, the remarkable resemblance of these three descriptions, especially concerning the 'theatre' and 'horse-racing' gives us sound reasons to suppose that Theodore's 'worldly error' (ܐܠܦܚܡܪ ܕܡܝܠܗ ܚܠܝܬܐ) is the Syriac rendering of the original Greek 'pomp' (πομπή).[39]

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33 Stenzel, *Taufe*, 105n99. See also the fuller description of Stenzel's view in n164 below.

34 2,43:12–14 (2,12); *S* 2,173:14–15.

35 *MC* 1.6; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 102; tr. Yarnold, 170.

36 Harkins, 321n59.

37 *PK* 3.25; ed. Kaczynski, I, 244 (=2/3,6); tr. Harkins, 168. Cf. *MF* 2.52; ed. Kaczynski, I, 144 (=1,19); tr. Harkins, 189.

38 Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 100.

39 This also matches the basic meaning of πομπή as pertaining to the processions around the race-track in the circus (see n145). A similar case may be found in the *apotaxis* of *TD* (II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, lines 4–5; tr. Sperry-White, 28). Besides the more common 'service'

We may surmise then, that the Greek formulation underlying Theodore's Syriac text was quite similar to the formula of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. A marked difference between the formulas of *syntaxis*, however, is that Theodore's formulas omit the object of engagement and just says "and I engage myself" (ܘܡܫܬܥܒܕ ܐܢܐ ܠܗ). The form of the *Constitutions* where it is said that the candidate associates himself "*to …*" is the more usual wording.[40] Intentionally or not, the dropping of 'Christ' as the object of engagement in Theodore's formula fully shifts the emphasis to the Trinity.[41]

5.1.2   *Function and Meaning of the Rituals*

The *apotaxis/syntaxis*—which logically follows the preceding exorcisms—is a ritual externalisation of the internal conversion dynamics from Satan to the Trinity.[42] This change of a lifetime is definitive and radical both in its abjuration of the Devil and in its dedication to God. By his proclamation "I abjure Satan" the candidate expresses his present separation from the Devil and the former association he had with him.[43] The latter concerns not only the personal history of the initiands, but includes the whole tragic story of mankind from the time of their forefathers and "that cruel and ancient pact".[44] If not for the deliverance of Christ, mankind in general and the baptizand in particular would still be oppressed by the yoke of the Tyrant.[45] But now, by grace, the candidate is liberated from Satan's servitude—as ritualised by the preceding exorcisms—able to abjure him by his own words[46] and to engage himself to God. With his renunciation the candidate confesses that he "will no more choose and accept any communion with"[47] the Tyrant who was "the cause of numerous and great calamities".[48] Instead, he firmly devotes himself to the Trinity and promises never to separate from Him and to lead a life in compliance with His commandments.[49]

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and 'works' of Satan, the formula also includes "and all your theatres, and your pleasures" (ܘܟܠܗܘܢ ܬܐܛܪܘܢ ܕܝܠܟ ܘܒܘܣܡܝܟ). It is possible that the 'theatres', or even the combined terms 'theatres and pleasures' is a translation of πομπή or πομπαί.

40   See n183 below.
41   See Witkamp, "Posture of One Who Prays".
42   Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 22–24; Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 260–261.
43   2,38:11 ff. (2,6); *s* 2,167:19 ff.
44   2,38:9 (2,5); *s* 2,167:17.
45   2,38:23–26 (2,6); *s* 2,168:1–5.
46   2,38:1–3 (2,5); *s* 2,167:10–13.
47   2,39:3–4 (2,6); *s* 2,168:16–17. Cf. 2,38:3 ff. (2,5–6); *s* 2,167:13 ff. and 2,44:1–9 (2,13); *s* 2,174:5–15.
48   2,37:30–31 (2,5); *s* 2,167:4.
49   2,44:1–9 (2,13); *s* 2,174:5–1.

Like other fourth-century mystagogues, Theodore portrays the *apotaxis/syntaxis* in contractual or covenantal terms, i.e. as a repudiation of the old pact with Satan and the establishment of a new agreement with God. So, concerning the phrase "I abjure Satan" Theodore comments:

> In this you imply both your present separation (ܡܣܬܪܩܘܬܐ)[50] from him and the former association that you had with him. Indeed, no one says that he abjures a thing with which he had formerly no association. The use of this expression is especially incumbent upon you as you had relation with him from the time of your forefathers, together with that cruel and ancient pact (ܬܢܝ), which resulted in the calamitous servitude to him, under which you lived.[51]

To characterise the former relation with the Devil, Theodore employs ܬܢܝ (agreement, contract, covenant),[52] a key term which also typifies the new bond with the Trinity. The (formula of) *apotaxis/syntaxis* is described as ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܘܬܢܝ, and ܬܢܝ, ܘܡܘܡܬܐ ܘܬܘܕܝܬܐ, but more regularly as ܡܘܡܬܐ ܘܬܢܝ (or ܬܢܝ, ܘܡܘܡܬܐ).[53] While ܬܘܕܝܬܐ probably denotes the contents of the promise (the profession) or the act of promising itself,[54] it is not easy to establish the meaning of ܡܘܡܬܐ here, which may be synonym for either ܬܢܝ or ܬܘܕܝܬܐ, or may even refer to the different stipulations of the ܬܢܝ.[55] The notion of a covenant is also expressed by the formula of the *syntaxis*, saying:

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50   Another possible translation of ܡܣܬܪܩܘܬܐ is 'renunciation', see Sokoloff, 877a. Interestingly, ܡܣܬܪܩܘܬܐ is also used with the meaning of 'divorce', which could further underline the covenantal character of the ritual as mentioned below.

51   2,38:3–10 (2,5); *s* 2,167:13–18.

52   2,38:9; *s* 2,167:17. Payne Smith, 616b. Cf. Sokoloff, 1654a–b. Hence Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 175, who obviously relied only on Mingana's English translation here, is mistaken when he puts forward that "the word 'contract' does not appear in Theodore". Moreover, 'contract' does occur as a rendering of ܬܢܝ in Mingana's translation within the context of the creed, see 1,34:7; *s* 1,163:2 and 1,34:11–12; *s* 1,163:5.

53   For ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܬܢܝ see 2,37:18 (2,4); *s* 2,166:19. ܬܢܝ, ܘܡܘܡܬܐ ܘܬܘܕܝܬܐ is employed in 2,37:28 (2,5); *s* 2,167:2–3. ܡܘܡܬܐ ܘܬܢܝ is used in 2,43:26 (2,12; *s* 2,173:25); 2,45:15 (2,16; *s* 2,175:25); 2,45:31–32 (2,17; *s* 2,176:13) and ܬܢܝ, ܘܡܘܡܬܐ occurs in 2,45:23 (2,16; *s* 2,176:6). Mingana translates all these variants with 'engagements and promises' or 'promises and engagements'. *T&D* offers a fully consistent rendering by always translating ܬܢܝ with 'pacte', ܡܘܡܬܐ with 'vœux', and ܬܘܕܝܬܐ with 'engagements'. The same nouns are used with reference to the creed in *s* 1,162:5 (ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܘܡܘܡܬܐ), *s* 1,163:2 (ܬܢܝ, ܘܡܘܡܬܐ), *s* 1,163:5 (ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܘܬܢܝ), and *s* 1,165:3 (ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܣܗܕܘܬܐ).

54   Payne Smith, 606b; Sokoloff, 1627a.

55   Payne Smith, 504a; Sokoloff, 1362a. Chrysostom speaks of τὰς συνθήκας καὶ τὰς ὁμολογίας (Stav. 2.18; ed. Kaczynski, II, 348 (= 3/2,18)).

"and I engage myself (ܘܡܩܝܡ ܐܢܐ ܩܝܡܐ) ...". The Afel of the verb ܩܘܡ with ܩܝܡܐ has the meaning of 'to make a covenant'.[56] So, the whole idea of a contract or covenant is certainly present in Theodore, although he does not elaborate on the notion of baptism itself as a contract as e.g. Chrysostom does.[57]

In his treatment of the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, Theodore mainly explains the formula. He emphasises that it is not enough to abjure Satan alone, who does not fight against mankind on his own, but makes use of earthly agents.[58] Hence, having said "I abjure Satan", the candidate adds "and all his angels, and all his service, and all his spectacle, and all his worldly error". The angels of Satan are "all men who received evil of some kind from him, which they practice to harm other people".[59] These include pagan poets, philosophers, but also heretics like Mani, Marcion, Valentinus, Paul of Samosata, Arius, Eunomius, and Apollinarius (of Laodicea),[60] further those who propagate observances of the Jews, and finally all those who promote ungodliness in general. According to Spinks it is debatable whether Theodore has "demythologised the demons", or whether he believed "that the heretics were manifestations of the devil".[61] The latter is certainly true as Theodore presents the heretics as Satan's instruments. Furthermore, as mentioned before, Theodore does not deny the existence of demons as such.[62] Yet, it is notable that he does not identify the 'angels' as 'demons'—as, for instance, Tertullian clearly does[63]—and he refrains from mentioning the demons here in a similar way as he did concerning the exorcisms. It may be that, despite his general belief in demons, Theodore deliberately ignores these accomplices of Satan in order to carefully avoid the idea of (ethical) demonic possession.[64]

With the renunciation of "all his service" (ܘܠܟܠܗ ܬܫܡܫܬܗ) the candidate rejects not only the aforementioned angels of Satan, but their evil works as well. These involve heathen sacrifices, the worship of idols and accompanying ceremonies, any pagan custom like astrology, all kinds of superstitious

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56   Payne Smith, 495a; Sokoloff, 1332b.

57   Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 93–95. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 92–94, 96–101.

58   2,39:5–13 (2,7); *s* 2,168:17–24.

59   2,39:14–16 (2,8); *s* 2,168:25–26.

60   Only Eunomius of Cyzicus (ca. 325–ca. 395) and Apollinarius of Laodicea (ca. 315–393) were contemporaries of Theodore. Apollinarius was active in Syria; Eunomius in both Syria and Cappadocia.

61   Spinks, "Sin and the Devil," 71.

62   See p. 146n108.

63   Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 18–21.

64   Cf. p. 145 above.

acts, and even the observance of Jewish practices and the impious service of the heretics, including their baptism and Eucharist.[65]

The "spectacle" (ܚܙܵܬܐ) of Satan originally concerned "all the things that were done by pagans *under the name of doctrine* (ܒܫܡܐ ܕܝܘܠܦܢܐ)".[66] It seems that Theodore is alluding here to the previously discussed "service of Satan", viz. the practice of Satan's angels, which Theodore defines in a similar way as "the things done by them *in the name of teaching*" (ܒܫܡܐ ܕܝܘܠܦܢܐ).[67] This "teaching" refers not primarily to 'theoretical ideas', but to practice, e.g. the pagan sacrifices and the worship of idols. In a similar way—still discussing the "service" of Satan—Theodore speaks of "the things performed by the heretics *under the name of doctrine* (ܒܫܡܐ ܕܝܘܠܦܢܐ),[68] whether it be their baptism or their Eucharist ...". Here also, the "doctrine" pertains to worship and ritual practice.[69] So, Satan's "spectacle" basically seems to concern the idolatrous pagan way of life and so further elaborates on and clarifies the previously discussed terms "angels" and "service". However, Theodore contends that in his time this "error of paganism had disappeared in the name of Christ". Instead, the Devil had "discovered[70] the heresies" as an alternative means to deceive mankind.

The final part of the formula of *apotaxis* concerns the rejection of Satan's "worldly error" (ܛܥܝܘܬܐ ... ܕܥܠܡܐ), possibly Theodore's 'pomp' (see above). This term covers "the theatre, the circus, the racecourse, the contests of the athletes, the profane songs, the waterorgans and the dances, which the Devil introduced into this world under the pretext of amusement, and through which he leads the souls of men to perdition".[71]

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65 2,41:21–42:29 (2,10); *s* 2,171:11–172:24. Except from the observances of Judaism, 'Cyril' has a similar understanding of Satan's 'service' (λατρεία). *MC* 1.8; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 104; tr. Yarnold, 171.

66 2,42:31–33 (2,11); *s* 2,173:1–3. My italics.

67 2,41:19–20 (2,10); *s* 2,171:9–10. My italics.

68 2,42:26–27 (2,10); *s* 2,172:20–21. My italics.

69 Earlier, discussing the "angels of Satan", Theodore speaks of "those men who under the name of philosophy (ܦܝܠܣܘܦܘܬܐ) established devastating doctrines (ܝܘܠܦܢܐ) among pagans ..." (2,40:1–3 (2,8); *s* 2,169:17–18). Although this phrase contains the 'doctrine' (ܝܘܠܦܢܐ), but this time plural, it lacks the typical "in the name of" (ܒܫܡܐ). It is less likely, therefore, that Theodore (also) refers to this passage here.

70 The Syriac reads ܐܫܟܚ here (2,43:4–5 (2,11); *s* 2,173:9), which can have the meaning of 'discover' or 'invent' (Payne Smith, 576a). Unlike Mingana, *T&D* and *BS* choose for the latter and render "inventa" and "erfand" respectively. Although both meanings fit the context, the idea that Satan 'discovered' the heresies is, of course, the more realistic view; the heresies were not only 'invented' in the fourth century. This also better harmonises with the larger context of Theodore's homily as he had earlier mentioned the second century Marcion and Valentinus as "heads of heresies" (2,40:5–8 (2,9); *s* 2,169:20–23).

71 2,43:12–16 (2,12); *s* 2,173:14–16.

Although Theodore himself claims that the error of paganism had disappeared in his time, his explanation of the formula betrays that he is still living in a time of transition. The original formula presupposed a pagan socio-religious context, whereas Theodore's time experienced an increasing Christianising of society.[72] These changing tides demanded a reinterpretation of the formula in order to safeguard its applicability. Struggling with this matter, Theodore considers the heresies as conceivable substitutes for the older and now disappearing pagan antagonist. Yet, probably realising that paganism had not definitively died out and remained a force to reckon with,[73] he did not consider it appropriate to completely take leave from the original context, resulting in the current tension of his discourse, leaving room for a rejection of both paganism and the heresies.

With the expression "and I engage myself (ܘܡܫܥܒܕ ܐܢܐ ܢܦܫܝ) ..." the initiand solemnly dedicates himself to the Trinity. As indicated above, ܘܡܫܥܒܕ ܐܢܐ ܢܦܫܝ has a covenantal meaning and constitutes the counterpart of the former, but now broken, pact with Satan. With an appeal to Heb. 11:6—"the person who draws nigh unto God ought to believe that He is"[74]—Theodore affirms the importance of the addition of "And I believe". Since the Divine nature and the good things prepared for man through Christ are invisible and unspeakable, the one who approaches baptism has need of a strong faith in order to believe without doubt.[75] By the addition of "and I am baptised", the baptizand expresses his belief and hope in the benefits of baptism to attain the citizenship of heaven.[76] The formula comes to a close with the confession of the Trinity— the cause of everything, who creates and renews—as it is in its names that the candidate will be baptised and receive in symbol the benefits which he will experience in reality in the future.[77]

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72   The second half of the fourth century witnessed the promulgation of several anti-pagan laws—especially directed against animal sacrifice—culminating in the harsh legislation of Theodosius I in 391–392. For a discussion of Theodosius's policy, see Williams & Friell, *Theodosius*, 34–41, 90 ff. and Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 212 ff., especially 233–237. It is a matter of debate, however, how successful these Theodosian laws really were. Anyway, it seems that (public) pagan cult, adapting itself to changing tides, survived well into the fifth century (see McLynn, "Pagans in a Christian Empire"; Salzman, "Public Sacrifice").

73   See n72 above.

74   2,44:10–11 (2,14); *s* 2,174:17.

75   2,44:12–20 (2,14); *s* 2,174:18–175:1.

76   2,44:21–32 (2,14); *s* 2,175:1–11.

77   2,44:33–45:14 (2,15); *s* 2,175:12–25.

5.2   Narsai of Nisibis

5.2.1   *Description and Discussion of the Rituals*
Narsai describes the ceremony of the *apotaxis/syntaxis* as follows:

> He lifts up his voice and says: 'Renounce ye the Evil One and his power
> and his angels and his service and his error.'
>   They first renounce the dominion of the Evil One who brought them to
> slavery; and then they confess the power of the Creator who has set them
> free. Two things he says who draws nigh to the mysteries of the Church: a
> renunciation of the Evil One, and a (confession of) faith in the Maker: 'I
> renounce the Evil One and his angels,' he cries with the voice, 'and I have
> no dealings with him, not even in word.'
>   The priest stands as a mediator (i.e. here 'interpreter'), and asks him:
> 'Of whom dost thou wish to become a servant from henceforth?' He learns
> from him whom he wishes to call Master; and then he inscribes him in the
> number of the firstborns [*sic*] of the height.
>   From Satan and his angels he (the priest) turns away his (the catechu-
> men's) face …[78]

Although Narsai presents the *apotaxis/syntaxis* as a two-in-one ritual, we have
earlier established that these rituals are probably separated, or better, bridged
by the Lawsuit.[79] The rituals are performed in front of the bishop, whom Narsai
portrays as actively encouraging and questioning the candidate(s). The bishop's
exhortation "Renounce ye" (ܟܦܘܪܘ)—addressing his audience in the plural—
may indicate that the *apotaxis* was a group ceremony, but not necessarily so.
It is possible that they were collectively exhorted, after which they made their
renunciation individually. Yet, the individual questioning of the initiand con-
cerning the *syntaxis*, followed by the individual rituals of the sponsor and
enrolment, makes it likely that the ritual of commitment was not a collective
ceremony.

    From the words following the bishop's exhortation "Renounce ye …" we may
infer that the formula of renunciation basically was:

ܟܦܪ ܐܢܐ ܒܣܛܢܐ/ܒܒܝܫܐ ܘܒܚܝܠܗ ܘܒܡܠܐܟܘܗ̈, ܘܒܬܫܡܫܬܗ ܘܒܛܘܥܝܝ̈,
ܘܒܛܥܝܘܬܗ.

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78   22,359:15–30; *s* :9–18. Cf. 22,361:22–33; *s* :14–362:1 and 22,367:7–14; *s* :4–8.

79   See § 2.2.

> I renounce the Evil One/Satan, his power and his angels and his service and his error.

On two points, however, the formula needs to be subjected to a closer examination. Firstly, did the candidate renounce 'the Evil One' or 'Satan'? Besides in the above mentioned admonition of the bishop, Narsai uses 'Evil One' several other times, as in: "They first renounce the dominion of the Evil One …",[80] "a renunciation of the Evil One …",[81] "The Evil One he renounces …"[82] and he puts in the mouth of the initiand: "'I renounce the Evil One and his angels,' …".[83] At the same time, Narsai says that the priest turns away the baptizand's face "[f]rom Satan and his angels …"[84] and speaks of a warfare "with Satan and with his angels and with his service".[85] Which term was included in the actual formula? Connolly opts for 'Satan', but without any substantiation.[86] 'Satan' is certainly the most common term to denote the adversary in a formula of renunciation.[87] It is also true that a choice for 'Evil One' would make Narsai, as it seems, the only witness to this term in a formula of abjuration. On the other hand, the flexibility by which other terms of the renunciation are added or dropped[88] makes it not unlikely that someone would employ a synonym for 'Satan'. We may remind ourselves that Narsai is particularly fond of 'Evil One' as opposed to 'Satan' or 'Devil'.[89] But what is the cause of this phenomenon? Is it Narsai's creativity and personal preference for 'Evil One' that overshadows the actual wording of the formula? Or, reversely, is Narsai's preference for 'Evil One' the result of the presence of the term in the formula? Since any effort to answer these questions seems nothing more than mere speculation, we have to leave the matter undecided.

Secondly, what does it mean that some terms are in the formula but not discussed by Narsai, while another is discussed, yet not in the formula? The latter three terms of the formula, 'angels', 'service', and 'error', are discussed later on in the homily, but not the first two, 'Evil One' (or 'Satan') and 'power'. As we

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80   22,359:17; *s* :10–11.
81   22,359:20–21; *s* :12–13.
82   22,359:32; *s* :18–19.
83   22,359:21–22; *s* :13.
84   22,359: 29–30; *s* 17–18.
85   22,359:38–39; *s* :23–24.
86   Connolly, xlix.
87   See p. 208. However, the *Canones Hippolyti* and the *Canones Basilii* have *diabolus*, see Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 45.
88   See n183 below.
89   See p. 180n276.

may be quite sure that 'Evil One' (or 'Satan') was included in the formula, the mere fact that 'power' is not discussed gives no good reason to suppose that the term does not belong in the formula. Reversely, in his discussion of the terms, Narsai adds 'invention' (ܥܒܝܕܬܐ),[90] a term not mentioned in the formula. Materially, this 'invention' resembles Theodore's term 'worldly error' (ܛܘܥܝܝ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ), which, as we have seen, is probably a Syriac pendant of the Greek πομπή.[91] We may wonder why this 'invention' is not mentioned in the 'formula' and suddenly pops up in a discussion of the terms. Narsai closely connects the 'invention' with 'service', when he says: "These [the angels of Satan, NW] perform the various services of his abominations, and even improve upon them with lying inventions (ܒܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܓܠܘܬܐ)."[92] It could be, then, that the formula itself did not include the term, but that Narsai chose to discuss 'invention' as a further clarification of 'service'. He may have been inspired by Theodore here, although it must be noted that Narsai's term as such differs from Theodore's. It is also possible, however, that 'invention' was part of the formula,[93] but was dropped from the earlier wording, maybe in order to fit into the twelve syllable pattern.

Albeit that Narsai does not provide a formula for the adherence, we may assume that such existed parallel to the formula of renunciation. The wording of the *syntaxis* is paraphrased as a confession of "the power of the Creator (ܚܝܠܐ ܕܒܪܘܝܐ)",[94] as "the one confession of the name of the Creator (ܚܕ ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܫܡ ܒܪܘܝܐ)",[95] and as "a (confession of) faith in the Maker (ܘܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܥܒܘܕܐ)".[96] It seems, then, that the formula mainly consisted of a short statement of faith in the Creator. This does not necessarily imply, however, that the term 'Creator' or 'Maker' as such was part of the formula, as it could be used here as a common designation for God.[97] Whether this confession was Trinitarian or not cannot be established with certainty, but there is an indication of the affirmative. Near the end of the 22nd homily, Narsai describes the *syntaxis*

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90   22,361:6,14,16; *s* :3,7,11.

91   See p. 187.

92   22,361:4–6; *s* :3–4.

93   Cf. Connolly, xlix.

94   22,359:18–19; *s* :11.

95   22,359:10–11; *s* :6.

96   22,359:21; *s* :13.

97   Cf. *BE*, where the candidates are encouraged to attach themselves "to the Creator", while the *syntaxis* itself is made "to Christ" (130ᵛ–131ʳ–131ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 147; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 115–116). The difference with Narsai may be, however, that this time the earlier reference to 'the Creator' could have been evoked by the full creed that follows, confessing God as Creator in the first article.

as "a confession of the heart in the name of the Divinity (ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܠܒܐ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ)".[98] The phrase "the name of the Divinity" is also used with reference to the consecration of the oil, the anointing, the consecration of the water, baptism, and the Eucharist. With reference to the consecration of the oil and the anointing, it is said: "The name of the Divinity (ܫܡ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ) he mixes in his hands with the oil; and he signs and says 'Father' and 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit.' ".[99] Concerning the consecration of the water: "With the name of the Divinity (ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ), the three Names, he consecrates the water …".[100] As regards to the formula of baptism uttered by the bishop: "Of the name of the Divinity (ܫܡ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ) he makes mention, and he says three times: 'Father and Son and Holy Spirit, one equality.' ".[101] And pertaining to the Eucharist, we are informed: "With the name of the Divinity (ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ), three hypostases, he completes his words …".[102] In all these cases "the name of the Divinity" is clearly a synonym for the three names of the Trinity.[103] From the above we may conjecture that "the name of the Divinity" in the phrase "a confession of the heart in the name of the Divinity" equally pertains to the Trinitarian wording of the formula of adherence. If so, we may wonder why Narsai is so hesitant to explicitly mention the three names regarding the *syntaxis* and uses instead 'Creator' (ܒܪܘܝܐ), his preferred designation for God.[104] A possible answer lies in the phenomenon that Narsai employs "the three names" or the explicit mentioning of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit only concerning the *ʾrāzē*, viz. the anointing, the consecration of the water, baptism, and the Eucharistic epiclesis. In this way, any reference to the Trinity becomes closely associated with a liturgical mystery. We may surmise, then, that Narsai deliberately avoids the Trinitarian formula, even any allusion to it, in order not to create the false impression of a liturgical mystery and to blur the distinction between the *ʾrāzē* and the other rituals.

Although Narsai does not elaborate on it, it seems likely that the baptizand was dressed in a similar way as during the following Lawsuit, i.e. 'naked' in the

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98   22,367:9–10; *s* :5–6.

99   22,367:25–27; *s* :14–15. Cf. 22,368:11–12; *s* :8.

100   21,345:24–25; *s* :14.

101   21,346:6–7; *s* :3–4.

102   21,353:28; *s* :16.

103   Cf. 22,366:19–21; *s* :12–13. The exact term 'Trinity' is never used by Narsai. Connolly's 'Trinity' (22,365:10) is not a faithful rendering of ܬܠܝܬܐܝܬ, (*s* :5) 'thrice', 'triply', or 'threefold' (Payne Smith, 614a). So, it is not said: "and with the Trinity men are signing men", but: "thrice, men are signing men".

104   Narsai uses ܒܪܘܝܐ about fourteen times. See e.g. 22,357:30 (*s* :18); 22,358:2 (*s* :1); 22,359:38 (*s* :22).

sense of 'without outer garment'. We also have no explicit testimony regarding the bodily movements and gestures involving the *apotaxis/syntaxis*. Yet, from the evidence we have—scarce though it is—we are able to make an intelligent guess. The ritual flow of the intermediate Lawsuit functions as our stepping stone here. At the beginning of the Lawsuit the initiand finds himself in a standing position. It seems acceptable, therefore, to surmise that the candidate made the preceding renunciation while standing. While the Lawsuit is on its way, the baptizand genuflects and concludes the ritual in a kneeling posture. But is he still kneeling during the subsequent profession of faith, the *syntaxis*? There is little doubt that the candidates were being anointed in a standing position as Narsai says that the bishop "makes them to pass one by one".[105] What is more, right before the anointing it is said that the pontiff "calls the King's servants by their names and causes them to stand (ܘܩܝܡܝܢ)".[106] This act is affirmed by an earlier passage where Narsai mentions—this time concerning the individual candidate—that the bishop "makes him to stand (ܠܗ ܩܝܡ) as a sheep in the door of the sheep-fold …".[107] This suggests that the candidates were only caused to stand just before the anointing and, by consequence, remained in a kneeling position during the *syntaxis*, the testimony of the sponsor, and the enrolment.

A ritual turning of the candidate may be reflected in the following passage: "From Satan and his angels he (the priest) turns away his (the catechumen's) face; and then he traces for him the image of the Divinity upon his forehead".[108] As the 'turning' and the signing on the forehead constitute the two members of one verse and the signing clearly refers to a *real* ritual, it seems acceptable to also consider the 'turning' as such. This 'turning of the face'—obviously a *pars pro toto* for a turning of the whole body—seems to be practically achievable only when the candidate is standing. At first glance the 'turning' seems directly to precede the anointing. This would fit the standing position of the initiand directly preceding the anointing. In that case, the 'turning' would not only concern the *syntaxis*—which does not directly precede the signing—but, in a way, all antecedent rituals.

Another approach seems more promising, however. For stylistic and aesthetic reasons Narsai more than once repeats, rearranges, and compresses. It is quite possible that we encounter such a phenomenon here. A similar verse

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105   22,367:18; *s* :10–11.
106   22,367:17–18; *s* :10. Connolly adds "forth" in parentheses after "stand", proposing a figurative reading of the passage. Although I suggest a literal interpretation, both readings do not necessarily exclude each other.
107   22,363:39–40; *s* :22–23.
108   22,359:29–31; *s* :17–18.

from a similar passage says: "They renounce the standard of the Evil One, and his power and his angels; and then he (the priest) traces the standard of the King on their forehead".[109] Narsai clearly speaks in a dense way here, skipping all other rituals between the renunciation (the first member of the verse) and the anointing (the second member). Since the second part of both verses clearly refers to the same ritual (the signing), it does not seem farfetched to propose that such may also be true for the first members of the verses. The 'turning' would pertain, then, to the renunciation, which also meets the term of a standing posture of the candidate. This, in addition, corresponds to Narsai's exhortation concerning the renunciation of Satan, his angels, and his service: "... and let us turn away our faces from their mysteries ...".[110] According to this proposal, the ritual turning took place directly following the *apotaxis*, which implies that the candidate faced the same direction during the Lawsuit, the *syntaxis*, and the enrolment.[111] Whether we have to do here with a West-East orientation cannot be established with certainty, although it is certainly possible given the widely dispersed West-East symbolism in Early Christianity.

Narsai twice makes mention of a ritual by the bishop that seems to conclude the *syntaxis*: "He waits for the priest to bring in his words before the Judge ..."[112] and "They give to the priest a promise by the words of their minds; and he brings in, reads (it) (ܩܪܐ)[113] before the good-pleasure of God".[114] What this ritual exactly entails is not clear. Maybe the bishop repeats the formula of *syntaxis* before God and in this way, as mediator, fulfils the appeal of the candidate at the beginning of the Lawsuit to reconcile God with him.[115]

Let us sum up our findings concerning the proceedings of the rituals of the *apotaxis/syntaxis*. The candidate first renounces Satan in a standing position in front of the bishop. The formula of renunciation was probably: "I renounce the Evil One (Satan), his power and his angels and his service (and his invention) and his error". The abjuration is then confirmed by a ritual turning of the baptizand, possibly from West to East. Next, the initiand experiences the Lawsuit which he concludes in a kneeling posture. Then, while still kneeling, the can-

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109   22,367:5–7; *s* :3–4.

110   22,361:11–12; *s* 8–9.

111   Interestingly, the ritual turning in Narsai's rite would differ then from the praxis of C and D, the two other rites with the pattern *apotaxis*-'exorcism'-*syntaxis*. In C and D, it is explicitly said that the candidate turns to the West for the renunciation and only turns to the East after the 'exorcism' to make his confession. See Brock, "Commentaries," 33, 59.

112   22,363:25–26; *s* :14–15.

113   Or: proclaims, pronounces, Payne Smith, 516b.

114   22,367:12–14; *s* :7–8.

115   22,362:9–11; *s* :6–7.

didate makes his allegiance to the Creator, probably by means of a Trinitarian formula.[116] This cluster of rituals is concluded by an act of the bishop, who possibly repeats the formula of allegiance before God, the Judge, and so restores the relationship between the Creator and the initiand.

5.2.2   *Function and Meaning of the Rituals*

Although Narsai does not pay much attention to it, the notion of the *apotaxis/ syntaxis* as a covenant or contract is certainly present in his homilies. The adherence is explicitly portrayed thus:

> By the hand of the priesthood they make a covenant (ܩܝܡܐ ܢܩܝܡܘܢ) with the Divinity, that they will not again return to Satan by their doings. They give to the priest a promise (ܫܘܘܕܝܐ)[117] by the words of their minds ...[118]

Narsai is not so straightforward regarding the renunciation, but the whole idea of a cruel pact typifying the candidate's former relationship with Satan is most likely implied. First of all, from the close relationship between the renunciation and profession as their ritual counterparts—which Narsai explicitly confirms[119]—it seems acceptable to infer that if the latter may be seen as a covenant, this also holds for the former. Secondly, we may recall here our earlier finding[120] that Satan's legal right over man—clearly presupposed in Narsai's liturgical homilies—is distinctly expressed in covenantal terms in his homily *On the Resurrection.*

Narsai does not comment on the formula of the *syntaxis*, but only explains the wording of the *apotaxis*.[121] Although he touches on other terms, he mainly discusses Satan's 'angels' (ܡܠܐ̈ܟܐ), like Theodore. Satan's 'angels' are "men clothed in deceit, who minister to him with abominations full of wickedness."[122] By means of his angels, Satan "leads men astray; and by them he casts the poison of his deceit into the mind of men."[123] The seven 'angels' Narsai mentions are all heretics: Mani, Valentinus, Arius, Eunomius, Apollinarius

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116   Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 186–188 considers the Lawsuit as part of the renunciation and so confuses the rituals.

117   Or: 'declaration', 'confession' (Sokoloff, 1519b; Payne Smith, 563b).

118   22,367:10–13; *s* :6–8.

119   22,359:17–23; *s* :10–14 and 22,367:5–10; *s* :3–6.

120   See p. 164–165.

121   22,359:40–363:21; *s* 359:24–363:14.

122   22,359:40–41; *s* :24–25.

123   22,361:3–4; *s* :1–2.

(of Laodicea), Paul (of Samosata), and Eutyches.[124] "His service" (ܬܫܡܫܬܗ)
may refer to the whole system of heathenism, its ideas and practices, but it
seems that Narsai is especially caricaturing its worship. So he says: "His ser-
vice (ܬܫܡܫܬܗ) is that service of which they boast; and therein his mysteries
(ܐܪ̈ܙܐ) are uttered,[125] and not those of the truth."[126] As ܬܫܡܫܬܗ and ܐܪ̈ܙܐ
have strong liturgical connotations,[127] although ܐܪ̈ܙܐ may also refer to 'magi-
cal rites' in general, we get the impression that Narsai is playing on words here.
The uttering of 'mysteries' may refer to the custom of pronouncing the Triune
formula by the bishop or priest. Whether the heretics employ the right formula
or not—Narsai does not elaborate on that—their evil context degrades it from
'true mysteries' to 'Satan's mysteries'. In this way Narsai ridicules and denies the
sacramental character of the services of the heretics. Their rites are not 'myster-
ies' in the sacramental sense, but instead have to be identified as 'magic rites',
maybe even comparable to the pagan (mystery) cults. To Satan's 'service' Nar-
sai adds 'invention' (ܥܒܝܕܬܐ),[128] a term not mentioned in the formula. This
'invention' refers to "the circus and the stadium and the theatres,[129] and the
riotous sounds of the songs which he has composed and written."[130] and so, in
terms of contents, is similar to the Greek πομπή and Theodore's "worldly error".
The final term of the formula, "his error" (ܛܥܝܘܬܗ) pertains to "soothsayings
and witchcrafts of all sorts—eye-winking and ear-tickling and street accost-
ing".[131]

   In a passage wherein Narsai most certainly does not reproduce the actual
words of the commitment uttered by the candidate, but highly dramatises the
ritual,[132] he makes the baptizand say:

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124   The only contemporary of Narsai in this list is Eutyches, who flourished around 450.
125   ܡܬܡܠܠܝܢ. Interestingly, the etpa. may also have the meaning of "to be cursed by" (Soko-
         loff, 773b). In that case, we may render the whole phrase as: "and his mysteries are cursed
         by it [His service]." (ܘܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܒܗ ܡܬܡܠܠܝܢ ܒܗ). Is this the intended meaning, or is Nar-
         sai playing on words here?
126   22,361:6–8; s :4–5.
127   ܬܫܡܫܬܐ may have the meaning of 'service, office, rite, worship' and ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ
         'administration of Holy Communion, the mass, liturgy,' (Payne Smith, 622b).
128   22,361:6,14,16; s :3,7,11.
129   Connolly, 38n1 saw here an indebtedness to 'Cyril's' *Mystagogical Catecheses*, but the level
         of agreement with Theodore is higher as we will see below. Of course, Connolly published
         his edition in 1909, more than twenty years before Mingana discovered and published
         Theodore's *Catechetical Homilies*.
130   22,361:17–18; s :11–12.
131   22,361:18–20; s 12–13.
132   Cf. p. 157.

'Lo,' he says, 'I have turned away from the Evil One to the Creator.' He puts the devils to shame by the utterance of his mouth, (saying): 'Hearken, ye rebellious ones, I have no part with you.' The assemblies of the height he makes to rejoice by the words of his faith: 'Come, ye spiritual ones, rejoice with me, for I am saved alive from destruction; I am your fellow-servant and a fellow-labourer in your works; and with that Lord to whom ye minister I am desirous of serving.' He names himself a soldier of the Kingdom of the height a fugitive who has returned to take refuge with the King of kings.[133]

Concerning the "assemblies of the height"—the angels—I have already remarked that the joy of these spiritual beings concerning the conversion of the baptismal candidate nicely fits Narsai's theological stance of man as the 'bond of the universe', uniting in himself both the spiritual and the material world.[134] Within the present context of the *syntaxis*, however, it is interesting to note that Chrysostom, in a way similar to Narsai, instructs his hearers that "[t]he angels who are standing by and the invisible powers rejoice at your conversion".[135] Yet, the difference is that Chrysostom adds that the angels record the words of the candidate's commitment and carry them to heaven where they are inscribed in the books.[136] This notion of a heavenly registration—which enhances the contractual character of the ritual—mediated by the angels, is also present in the *Ordo of Constantinople*, where it is said:

> All the powers of heaven are present here. The angels and archangels invisibly write down your words. The cherubim and the seraphim open the heavens to receive your contracts and carry them to the Master.[137]

Although Narsai does not refer to such a heavenly recording of the *syntaxis*, we may remind ourselves that this ritual is closely followed by the enrolment. It is true that an enrolment of the candidate's *name* is not the same as the regis-

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133   22,361:22–33; *S* :14–21.
134   See p. 166n190.
135   *Stav.* 2.20; ed. Kaczynski, II, 348 (= 3/2,20); tr. Harkins, 51.
136   *Stav.* 2.20; ed. Kaczynski, II, 348, 350 (= 3/2,20); tr. Harkins, 51.
137   *BE* 130ᵛ–131ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 147; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 115. Cf. "The contract is made. The Master keeps it in heaven." (132ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 148; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 116). For the relation between Chrysostom and the *Ordo of Constantinople*, see 51. 'Cyril' of Jerusalem also mentions a heavenly registration, but this time within the context of the *apotaxis* and without any reference to angels (*MC.* 1.5; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 100; tr. Yarnold, 170).

tration of his *words*, but we may wonder whether we are confronted with a far echo of such a notion here.

5.3   The Rituals Contextualised

Kelly describes the renunciation as "the only universal anti-demonic Christian initiation ritual".[138] Although such a statement seems too bold in light of the available evidence, especially for the East,[139] it is true that the *apotaxis* is found in many baptismal rites from East to West. When it arose is a matter of debate,[140] but our first witness, Tertullian,[141] portrays the renunciation as a developed ritual, the negative counterpart to the positive baptismal confession.[142] Tertullian's formula of renunciation says: "I renounce the Devil, and his pomps, and his angels" (*Renuntiare* (*renuntiasse*) *diabolo et pompae et angelis eius*).[143] The term *pompa* has its origin in the Greek πομπή, the carrying around of statues of the gods in a ritual procession.[144] Whether Tertullian's *pompa* still has this connotation or not,[145] it seems that the term basically refers to *idol-*

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138   Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 94.

139   See below.

140   Boismard, "I Renounce Satan" places the origin of the ritual in New Testament times and conjectures that 1 John 3:8 echoes the original formula of renunciation: "I renounce Satan and his works" (p. 111). But see Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 21–32, 94–95 for a criticism of such an early dating. Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 23 locates the origin of the ritual in apostolic times or shortly thereafter. He finds proof for the existence of the ritual in the writings of Justin Martyr, which would imply that the ritual was practiced in Rome in the 130s (p. 35, 37). Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes", 43 is sceptical of Kirsten's proposal however. Cf. Stenzel, *Taufe*, 100n76. More recently, Stewart, "Earliest Syntaxis" has not only defended the possibility of a ritual of *apotaxis/syntaxis*(!) in New Testament times but has also revived the older suggestion of Lietzmann that the terms *sacramentum* and *carmen* in Pliny's letter to Trajan (*Ep.* 10.96.7) refer to the renunciation and confession respectively. Although the existence of a ritualised renunciation and profession in the New Testament is highly questionable, the idea that Pliny's letter witnesses a baptismal ritual has found some consent. See for example Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes", 44 and Crehan, *Baptism and the Creed*, 176–177.

141   For a discussion of the *apotaxis* in Tertullian's rite, see Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 9–22.

142   The confession—consisting of the three baptismal questions—is more archaic than the renunciation. See Stenzel, *Taufe*, 100–101.

143   Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 11.

144   Waszink, "Pompa diaboli," 23; Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 16. Cf. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1120a.

145   The meaning of *pompa* in Tertullian and his contemporaries has been much discussed. See Waszink, "Pompa diaboli"; Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 16–18. Cf. Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 98; Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 28. It has been proposed e.g. that the *pompa* refers to the

atria, i.e. any act which, one way or the other, is related to idolatry.[146] With
the *angeli diaboli* Tertullian not only renounces the fallen angels/demons, but
as well the pagan gods, who were themselves—in line with the apologists—
identified with the demons.[147] As Tertullian's position makes clear, the original
aim of the *apotaxis* was the rejection of the whole of heathenism and its gods.
With the decline of paganism from the fourth century onwards, however, the
object of renunciation shifted more and more towards personal sins[148] and so
became a "moralisch-aszetischen Akt des einzelnen".[149]

Besides *diabolus* (διάβολος)/*satanas* (σατανᾶς), the most common terms in
a formula of *apotaxis* in both East and West are *pompa(e)* (πομπή/πομπαὶ),[150]
opera (ἔργα), and *angeli* (ἄγγελοι).[151] In the East, however, the term *cultus*
(λατρεία) is also widely attested.[152] In both the Orient and the Occident, we

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demons in distinction from Satan's angels. Waszink, "Pompa diabolic" contends, however,
that Tertullian more or less identifies the angels as demons (cf. Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 20)
and that *pompa* never refers to personal beings. He specifically locates the origin of Tertul-
lian's *pompa* in the *pompa circi*—the carrying of the statues of idols around the racetrack
of the circus—and consequently evolved into a symbol expressing anything idolatrous or
ungodly. Cf. Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes," 98; cf. Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*,
98.

146 Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 17–18.

147 Ibid., 18–22.

148 Ibid., 52, 62. Interestingly, Kirsten (pp. 30–31) indicates a more or less reverse development
from the New Testament until Tertullian. Although the connection between the Devil and
sin is certainly not absent from the New Testament, Kirsten argues, the focus of conversion
lies on the rejection of the old man and the works of the flesh, while the later renunciation
mainly concerns Satan and his servants. In this way, the centre of gravity has been shifted
and the ritual received a 'demonic' aspect alien to its original meaning.

149 Stenzel, *Taufe*, 98.

150 The singular is common in the East, the plural is regularly used in the West. Origen and
the *Apostolic Constitutions*, however, have the plural. See Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 97 and
for the formula of the *Constitutions*, see also n183 below.

151 See Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 52; cf. Stenzel, *Taufe*, 98. Kirsten (p. 53) observes that especially
in the border areas—where missionary activities and contact with paganism lasted the
longest—the angeli (ἄγγελοι) remain part of the formula much longer than in the inland
of the Roman Empire. Boismard, "I Renounce Satan", 111–112 contends that the original for-
mula was written in Hebrew and said: "I renounce Satan and his works". In the subsequent
process of translating the wording into Greek, the term 'his works' (*ml'ktw*) was confused
with 'his angels' (*ml'kyw*) and 'his mission' (*ml'kwtw*)—with the meaning of 'solemn train'
or 'pomp'. Although this is an intriguing hypothesis, it has not received much consent. See
the criticisms of Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 95 and Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdi-
enstes," 98n130.

152 See n183 below for the Eastern formulas and Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 39–74 for a collection of
many Eastern and Western formulas, and a thorough discussion of the (development of
the) formulas in the Orient and the Occident.

observe a tendency to expand over time: the formulas become longer and longer.[153] In the West, these additions were mostly meant as clarifications of the more common terms. In Rome, this process eventually comes to an end, when in the seventh century the formula becomes summarised and fixated as *renuntiare diabolo et omnibus operibus eius et omnibus pompis eius*.[154] This formula becomes the dominant one in the West in the ninth century.[155] In the East, however, the formulas never got standardised.[156] The *apotaxis* (and *syntaxis*, see below) exists in two forms, one indirect or impersonal—with Satan addressed in the third person—another direct or personal—with Satan addressed in the second person. The impersonal form ultimately prevailed in the West and although Kelly maintains that the personal form was the regular practice in the East,[157] it seems better to speak of a 'mixed practice'.[158]

Let us turn to the East now in order to sketch a frame of reference for our comparison of the rituals of Theodore and Narsai. The evidence for a ritual of renunciation is scarce in the older Syriac tradition. The *Didascalia* does not mention any such ritual within the context of baptism.[159] The same is true for the *Acts of Thomas*. Whether Aphrahat's rite included a ritual *apotaxis* remains inconclusive.[160] A similar cloud of uncertainty hangs over Ephrem's rite.[161] The

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153   Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 59 ff.

154   Ibid., 64.

155   Ibid., 69.

156   Ibid., 63.

157   Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, 99.

158   See n183 below.

159   It does, however, contain a confession before entering the catechumenate. See *DA* 10; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 119 line 11; Vol. 402, 113 line 9. Cf. Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes," 116, 127; Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 54; Bradshaw, *Reconstructing*, 55.

160   Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes," 117, 127–128 traces an approximation to a renunciation, and a baptismal confession, although the ritual position of the latter remains unclear. Finn, *West and East Syria*, 136 and Winkler, *Armenische Initiationsrituale*, 157, 159 conjecture the existence of an *apotaxis*. Yet, Duncan, "Demonstrations of Aphraates" (cf. his diss. *Demonstrations of Aphraates*) does not mention an *apotaxis* in his discussion of Aphrahat's rite. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 51 considers the existence of a renunciation "likely", but admits that "there is no explicit reference."

161   Brock, "Commentaries", 60n20 mentions that Ephrem knows an *apotaxis*, but does not document this claim. Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 118 refers to the hymn *In secundum adventum domini nostri Iesu Christi*, which mentions that the candidate blows towards the Devil while facing the West, a clear reference to the *apotaxis*. Yet, today's scholarship does not consider this hymn—which is included in the corpus Ephraem Graecus—as authentic anymore. Seppälä, "Baptismal Mystery," 1144 suggests that Ephrem's rite basically looked like *AR*, including an *apotaxis*. Although this is possible, we can only be sure if we find pos-

story of the baptism of the priests of Artemis in the *Syriac Acts of John* mentions a renunciation of idols and a following confession. However, as this 'renunciation' is "influenced by the circumstances of the story",[162] it is unclear whether the text reflects a common ritual practice.[163]

Nevertheless, the fourth- and fifth-century Ordos and documents of baptismal instruction of the Orient show a uniform practice, not only of an *apotaxis* but also of an accompanying *syntaxis*.[164] With the exception of the *Testamentum Domini*—where an anointing with exorcised oil takes place between the renunciation and adherence[165]—and Narsai's ritual, the *apotaxis* is normally directly followed by the *syntaxis*. The twin rituals (and all following acts) were normally ministered by the bishop, although a presbyter could assist him or do the honours.[166]

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itive confirmation of this in Ephrem himself. I have not been able to locate any reference or allusion to an *apotaxis* in Ephrem's authentic hymns.

162   Klijn, "Syriac Acts of John", 224. Cf. Meyers, "Structure," 36.

163   Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes," 127 and n. 263. Kretschmar (p. 117) sees in the 'renunciation' a precursor of the ritual *apotaxis*. Winkler, *Armenische Initiationsrituale*, 155 holds a similar position. Meyers, "Structure," 36 speaks of "evidence of a developing renunciation and confession".

164   The West never saw the development of this liturgical pendant of the renunciation. There, the baptismal questioning remained the counterpart of the *apotaxis*. See Stenzel, *Taufe*, 104–108, 121 for an informative discussion of the *syntaxis* (cf. Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 77 ff.). According to Stenzel (p. 105 and n. 99), the ritually simpler adherence to Christ is probably older than the Trinitarian form. He sees special confirmation for this view in the phenomenon that sources which have the more elaborate Trinitarian form—so the *Apostolic Constitutions* and 'Cyril'—still speak of an *apotaxis* 'to Christ'. Stenzel also contends that the more developed *apotaxis*—with usually three or more members—soon resulted in a more expanded *syntaxis*, which, influenced by the baptismal questions (but see below), became Trinitarian and now and then even developed into a full creed. Concerning the origin of the *syntaxis*, Stenzel (pp. 106–108) conjectures that the increasing ritual distance between the baptismal questions and the *apotaxis*, by inserting the anointing(s) and especially the blessing of the water, evoked the need for a new counterpart for the abjuration of Satan (cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 26n17). Furthermore, Stenzel (pp. 120–121) considers the rise of a declaratory Syriac baptismal formula a result of the development of the *syntaxis*. With the inclusion of the *syntaxis*, the second ritual confession by means of the baptismal questioning had become redundant and was replaced by the former. Here, he supposes that the Syriac declaratory formula was younger than the baptismal questioning. Whitaker, however, has argued in his two important contributions "Baptismal Formula" and "History" that the Syriac declaratory form can be traced back to at least the beginning of the third century.

165   *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, lines 4–11; tr. Sperry-White, 28.

166   For Chrysostom, see Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 90–91. See further *TD* II.8 (ܐܪܟܝܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ); ed. Rahmani, 126 line 23; tr. Sperry-White, 27 and *AC* VII,22:1 (ὦ ἐπίσκοπε ἢ πρεσβύτερε) ed. Metzger, III, 46; tr. Grisbrooke, 66 and n. 2. The *Euchologion* speaks of the 'archbishop'

In the Jerusalem *MC*,[167] the *Testamentum Domini*,[168] and the *Barberini Eucho-
logion*[169] the candidate faces West—the region of darkness—for the renun-
ciation and turns eastward—towards the Sun, the symbol of Christ and the
location of paradise—to make the profession.[170] And although it is not explic-
itly stated, the West-East turning makes it most likely that the baptizands were
standing during the rituals.[171] *MC* mentions the stretching of the hand by the
candidate during the *apotaxis*.[172] The *Euchologion* instructs the candidates to
take off their outer garments and shoes, to hold themselves erect and to raise
their hands towards heaven for the renunciation, and explicitly mentions the
lowering of the hands for the *syntaxis*. Furthermore, the *Euchologion* says that
the candidates—as a group[173]—repeat both the formulas of *apotaxis* and *syn-
taxis* three times after the archbishop, and breathe[174] on the devil after the
renunciation. The archbishop concludes the rituals with a short prayer.[175]

　　　　(ἀρχιεπίσκοπος), see *BE* 128ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 146; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 114.
　　　　See also the discussion on p. 54 above.

167　*MC* 1.2 (West), 1.9 (East); ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 96, 106; tr. Yarnold, 169, 172.

168　*TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, lines 4–11; tr. Sperry-White, 28.

169　*BE* 131ʳ (West), 131ᵛ (East); ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 147; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 116.

170　For a lengthy discussion of the ritual West-East orientation and its religion-historical back-
　　　　ground, see Dölger, *Sonne der Gerechtigkeit*; cf. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 30–33; Kirsten,
　　　　Taufabsage, 82–83.

171　See my earlier remark above concerning the possibility of a West-East orientation in
　　　　Theodore's and Chrystom's rite on p. 183.

172　*MC* 1.2; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 96; tr. Yarnold, 169. What is the meaning of the stretching of
　　　　the hand here? According to one view, this gesture accompanied the making or deny-
　　　　ing of an oath (Dölger, *Sonne der Gerechtigkeit*, 118–119; Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 28).
　　　　Another standpoint suggests that the raising of the hand is a sign of threatening, rejection
　　　　and abhorrence (Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 84). The latter proposal seems the most promising
　　　　here. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* II.2.6 explicitly says that the stretching
　　　　of the hands is "a gesture of abhorrence" (ed. Heil & Ritter, *Ecclesiastica hierarchia*, 72;
　　　　tr. Luibheid, "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy", 202). Moreover, it is important to note that the
　　　　stretching of the hand in *MC* is not mentioned concerning the *syntaxis*, which we would
　　　　have expected if it accompanied a pledge. A similar praxis is found in the *Euchologion*,
　　　　where it is said that the candidates raise their hands for the *apotaxis*, but lower them
　　　　again in order to make the *syntaxis* (131ʳ–131ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 147; tr. Finn, *Liturgy
　　　　of Baptism*, 116).

173　*BE* 131ʳ–131ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 147; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 116, cf. 91.

174　Which was—like spitting—a fierce cultural expression of contempt. The breathing on
　　　　Satan is also attested by Ephrem and Pseudo-Dionysius, see Dölger, *Exorzismus*, 118–119.
　　　　For a discussion of the ritual and its historic-religious background of these rituals, see Döl-
　　　　ger, *Sonne der Gerechtigkeit*, 1–36. See also n109.

175　*BE* 128ʳ–132ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 146–148; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 114–116.

The *Apostolic Constitutions*, Chrysostom, Proclus, and *AR* do not refer to a West-East orientation.[176] Concerning Chrysostom, we have already seen that such a turning is also highly problematic since the candidate—as in Theodore's rite—finds himself in a kneeling position during the *apotaxis/syntaxis*.[177] Also similarly to Theodore, the ritual is introduced by a (collective) prayer, during which the candidates have their arms outstretched towards heaven. As the stretching of the hands is only mentioned with reference to this preceding prayer, we cannot be sure whether this posture was continued during the following *apotaxis/syntaxis*, although Theodore's rite shows that such is certainly possible. Unlike Theodore, Chrysostom explicitly mentions the candidates making their renunciation-adherence individually. Another distinction pertains to the 'nakedness' of the candidate and the use of sackcloth, neither of which are mentioned by Chrysostom or even alluded to. He does, however, pay much more attention to the idea of a 'contract'.[178] If my earlier suggestion regarding Proclus' rite is correct,[179] the initiand stands on sackcloth, 'naked' and barefoot. It is also mentioned that he raises his hands to heaven "that you may come to know: How the Lord accepts you as one without sins ...", followed by what seems to be a rough description of the following rituals.[180] Such may imply that the candidate only raised his hands concerning the *syntaxis*. The *Apostolic Constitutions* and *AR* do not provide any insight concerning the dress of the candidates, bodily movements or gestures.

Only Chrysostom and the *Euchologion* inform us when the rituals took place. They agree that the rituals occurred on Good Friday; Chrysostom adds a time of

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176   Chrysostom and Proclus do, however, use the symbolism of darkness and light. Explaining the deeper meaning of day and hour of the rituals, Chrysostom instructs his audience: "For on Friday at the ninth hour the thief entered paradise; the darkness, which lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour, was dissolved; and the Light, perceived by both body and mind, was taken up as a sacrifice for the whole world. For at that hour Christ said: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*. Then the sun we see looked on the Sun of Justice shining from the cross and turned back its own rays." (*PK* 3.19; ed. Kaczynski, I, 240 (= 2/3,4); tr. Harkins, 166, his italics). And just preceding the formula of *apotaxis*, Proclus says: "No longer is Eve held captive by the chains of sin. No longer is her mind enshrouded by the darkness of deception, because she perceived the enemy in the light, because she came to know the treachery of the chief in daytime and sends him the token of her renunciation." ("Mystagogy on Baptism" I.2; ed. Leroy, *Proclus de Constantinople*, 188; tr. Barkhuizen, "Proclus of Constantinople", 5).

177   *PK* 3.21–22; ed. Kaczynski, I, 240, 242 (= 2/3,4); tr. Harkins, 167; *Stav*. 2.18; ed. Kaczynski, II, 348 (= 3/2,18); tr. Harkins, 50. And see p. 183 above.

178   See p. 210.

179   See p. 134n41.

180   "Mystagogy on Baptism" VIII. 49–50; ed. Leroy, *Proclus de Constantinople*, 193; tr. Barkhuizen, "Proclus of Constantinople", 15.

3 p.m.[181] Only *MC* mentions that the *apotaxis/syntaxis* took place in the "outer hall of the *baptisterium*" (τὸν προαύλιον τοῦ βαπτίσματος), but from archaeological excavations we get the impression that it was not unusual to perform these rituals in a room distinctive from the *baptisterium* itself.[182]

The formulas of the *apotaxis/syntaxis* share a basic pattern of rejection and adherence.[183] Apart from Narsai—where possibly the 'Evil One' is rejected—and *AR*—where the formulas are not provided[184]—every *apotaxis* renounces 'Satan', while the formula of *syntaxis* is either Christological or Trinitarian. The *Testamentum Domini* and *MC* fall in the latter category, together with Theodore—who does not have an addressee in the *apotaxis*, but whose formula is basically Trinitarian—and probably Narsai. Some formulas *directly* address

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181   For Chrysostom see *PK* 3.19–20; ed. Kaczynski, I, 238, 240 (= 2/3,4); tr. Harkins, 166–167. Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 88–90. For the Euchologion, see *BE* 128ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 146; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 114.

182   Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes", 184, 204–205, 208.

183   The formulas for the *apotaxis* (A) and *syntaxis* (S) of the Eastern rituals are the following (in alphabetical order). *APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS*: A) Ἀποτάσσομαι τῷ σατανᾷ καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς πομπαῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς λατρείαις αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ταῖς ἐφευρέσεσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτόν; S) Καὶ συντάσσομαι τῷ Χριστῷ· καὶ πιστεύω καὶ βαπτίζομαι εἰς ... (full Trinitarian Creed follows) (VII,41:1–4; ed. Metzger, III, 96, 98; tr. Grisbrooke, 67; Eng. trans. omits 'service'). // *BARBERINI EUCHOLOGION*: A) Ἀποτάσσομαι τῷ Σατανᾷ· καί πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ· καὶ πάσῃ τῇ λατρείᾳ αὐτοῦ· καί πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ· καί πάσῃ τῇ πομπῇ αὐτοῦ; S) Καὶ συντάσσομαι τῷ Χριστῷ· Καὶ Πιστεύω εἰς ἕνα θεόν ... (full Creed follows) (131ʳ–131ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 147; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 116). // CHRYSOSTOM: A) Ἀποτάσσομαί σοί Σατανᾶ καὶ τῇ πομπῇ σου καὶ τῇ λατρείᾳ σου καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις σου (cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 95–97); S) Καὶ συντάσσομαι σοί Χριστέ (*Stav.* 2.20–21; ed. Kaczynski, II, 348 (= 3/2,20–21); tr. Harkins, 51). During his patriarchate in Constantinople, Chrysostom attests a slightly different *apotaxis* replacing 'his works' for 'his angels' (cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 96). // *MC*: A) Ἀποτάσσομαί σοί Σατανᾶ. Καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἔργοις σου. Καὶ πάσῃ τῇ πομπῇ αὐτοῦ (σου). Καὶ τῇ λατρείᾳ σου; S) Πιστεύω εἰς τὸν Πατέρα καὶ εἰς τὸν Ψἱὸν καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα καὶ εἰς ἓν βάπτισμα μετανοίας (*MC* 1.4–9; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 98, 100, 102, 104, 106; tr. Yarnold, 170–172). // PROCLUS: A) Ἀποτάσσομαι σοί Σατανᾶ καὶ τῇ πομπῇ σου καὶ τῇ λατρείᾳ σου καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις σου καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἔργοις σου; S) συντάνσσομαι σοί Χριστέ ("Mystagogy on Baptism" II.3, III.13–14; ed. Leroy, *Proclus de Constantinople*, 188–189; tr. Barkhuizen, "Proclus of Constantinople", 5, 7). // *TESTAMENTUM DOMINI*: A) ܕܡܥܨܐ ܡܢ) ܗܘ ܟܠܗ ܘܟܠܗ ܦܘܠܚܢܟ ܘܟܠܗܝܢ ܬܐܛܪܘܢ ܘܪܓܝܓܬܟ ܘܟܠܗܘܢ ܥܒܕܝܟ (I renounce you, Satan, and all your service, and all your theatres, and your pleasures, and all your works.); S) ܡܫܬܥܒܕ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ (I submit to you, Father and Son and Holy Spirit ...) (II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128 lines 4–5, 9–11; tr. Sperry-White, 28).

184   *AR* 2–3 (ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries", 30–33). Concerning the renunciation it is said: "Whoever draws near to baptism first denies Satan; the denial of Satan (means) the keeping away from evil works." From this we may conjecture that the formula at least contained the terms 'Satan' and '(his) works'.

Satan and Christ (or the Trinity),[185] others speak of the different parties in the third person.[186] The formulas of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Barberini Euchologion*—together with those of Theodore and Narsai—belong to the last-mentioned category. *MC* may be a case on its own with a direct address in the *apotaxis* and a creed-like *syntaxis*.[187]

A closer look at the exact form of the formulas shows a wide variety, especially in the *apotaxis*, which, besides 'Satan', may contain three, four, or even six different terms, and in differing orders.[188] No two formulas are exactly the same and not one is completely similar to the versions of Theodore or Narsai. Nevertheless, as already indicated above, Theodore's formulas have some interesting parallels with those of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and shares the adjective 'all' before the terms ("all his angels …") with the *Testamentum Domini* and the *Euchologion*. Narsai's formula of abjuration has some unique features;

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185   See n183 above.

186   The personal form seems the more primitive one. See Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 98; cf. Wenger, *Huit Catéchèses*, 82.

187   There exists some disagreement among scholars as to whether the Jerusalem *MC* contains a *syntaxis*. Stenzel, *Taufe*, 121, for example, denies its existence (although he seems to confirm the ritual in 105n99!) and Johnson, *Rites of Christian* Initiation, 154 is uncertain as his question mark indicates. Others, however, bluntly acknowledge its existence. So Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 40 and Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 59. The reason for this disagreement probably lies in the character of 'Cyril's' *syntaxis* which says: "I believe in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit and in one baptism of repentance." (*MC* 1.9; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 106; tr. Yarnold, 172). Unlike other formulas, 'Cyril' does not introduce the wording with an ἀποτάσσομαι. Nevertheless, the direct context leaves little doubt that we are dealing with a *syntaxis* here. The formula is recited facing the East and immediately follows the renunciation towards the West. Both rituals are clearly each other's counterpart and the only sensible pendant of an *apotaxis* is a *syntaxis*. That the creed-like formula is indeed the *syntaxis* is further confirmed by an earlier remark of 'Cyril' in the same catechesis wherein he speaks of "… renouncing Satan and siding with Christ …" (τὴν ἀπόταξιν τοῦ Σατανᾶ καὶ τὴν πρὸς τὸν Χριστὸν σύνταξιν; *MC* 1.8; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 104; tr. Yarnold, 171 cf. 202n9; cf. Röwekamp, *MC*, 27). This terminology may be reminiscent of an earlier stage when the *syntaxis* was explicitly made to Christ (cf. Stenzel, *Taufe*, 105n99). J.N.D Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 33 surmised that 'Cyril's' formula of *syntaxis* is in fact an abridgement of the full Creed which 'Cyril' had commented on earlier, "but which he may have felt some compunction about setting down". However, Kelly's suggestion has been criticised by Bradshaw, "Profession of Faith," 105, who considers it "highly improbable" as Egeria witnesses the candidates reciting the Creed to the bishop prior to baptism (cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 59). Röwekamp, *MC*, 28 may be right that the four members of the *syntaxis* parallel the four members of the *apotaxis*. Nevertheless, a *syntaxis* followed by a full Creed is attested by the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

188   See n183 above.

the terms "Evil One"(?), "his power", and "his error" are not witnessed by other sources. Unfortunately, we remain ignorant of the exact wording of Narsai's *syntaxis*. Yet, it is worth noting that *AR*—where neither formula is given— speaks of a "confession of the Creator" (ܐܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܒܒܪܘܝܐ),[189] a phrase that closely resembles Narsai's "(confession of) faith in the Maker (ܘܡܘܕܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܥܒܘܕܐ)".[190]

In a similar way as in Theodore and Narsai, the renunciation and adherence is commonly portrayed as a συνθήκη,[191] a contract or covenant.[192] Especially Chrysostom pays much attention to the whole idea[193] and makes a comparison with a marriage contract,[194] a business agreement,[195] and a master-slave relationship. So, concerning the words of the *apotaxis* (and the accompanying *syntaxis*), he may say:

> They constitute a contract with the Master. When we are buying slaves, we first ask those who are for sale if they are willing to serve us. Christ does the same. When He is about to take you into His service, He first asks you if you are willing to put away that cruel and harsh master, and He accepts from you your contract. He does not force His mastership on you.[196]

The only two who, besides Theodore and Narsai, explain (some elements of) the formula are Cyril and Chrysostom. Neither of them, however, interprets the 'angels' as 'heretics'.

To sum up, the rituals of renunciation and adherence in the baptismal rites of Syria and Constantinople, although sharing a basically similar pattern, display some notable differences in performance and a wide diversity in the actual wording of the formulas. The rituals of Theodore and Narsai fit nicely into this colourful picture, sometimes agreeing with others, but at other times distinguishing themselves by some unique feature. Theodore's overall liturgy is quite similar to Chrysostom's. Narsai's structure *apotaxis*-Lawsuit-*syntaxis*, however,

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189 *AR* 3; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries", 32–33.

190 22,359:21; *S* :13.

191 Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1330b–1331a.

192 See e.g. *MC* 1.9; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 106; tr. Yarnold, 171 and *BE* 132ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 148; tr. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 116. For a discussion of the contractual idea, see Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 85, 92, 102; Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 93–95; Crehan, *Baptism and the Creed*, 96–110; Harkins, *Pre-Baptismal Rites*, 228 ff.; Kirsten, *Taufabsage*, 27, 78–80.

193 Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 93–95.

194 *PK* 3.26; ed. Kaczynski, I, 244(= 2/3,6); tr. Harkins, 168.

195 *Stav.* 2.17; ed. Kaczynski, II, 346 (= 3/2,17); tr. Harkins, 50.

196 *MF* 2.49; ed. Kaczynski, I, 143 (= 1,19); tr. Harkins, 188.

is typical and not witnessed by any other contemporary source. Also concerning the formulas, Narsai's wording of the renunciation seems the most distinctive.

5.4   The Rituals Compared

Comparing the rituals of renunciation and profession, we have to remind ourselves that the structure of both rites differs. Theodore's rite follows the most common pattern with a *syntaxis* that directly succeeds the *apotaxis*, while Narsai witnesses a more unique order of *apotaxis*-Lawsuit-*syntaxis*. Furthermore, Theodore's abjuration is preceded by a penitential prayer which is, as a distinctive ritual, absent from Narsai's liturgy. Also the bodily movements are dissimilar. Theodore's candidate experiences the rituals in a kneeling position, combined with the common praying posture, i.e. the hands outstretched and the eyes directed to heaven. Narsai's initiand, however, probably makes his renunciation while standing and his adherence while kneeling; nothing is said about a praying posture. We have found some indications that Narsai's baptizand turned around after the *apotaxis*, possibly from West to East. Such a ritual turning is not attested in Theodore's homilies and is even highly unlikely because of the kneeling posture of the candidates. Concerning the actual performance of the rituals, we have noticed that Theodore speaks of deacons who assist the initiands to recite the formulas, a practice not witnessed by Narsai.

A close comparison of the formulas of renunciation yields clear similarities and differences, but also undecided matter, which is caused by uncertainty regarding the exact wording of Narsai's formula. Issues in the latter category are whether Narsai's formula included 'Evil One' or 'Satan', and the obscurity concerning the term 'invention'—was it present in the formula or not? It is obvious that these questions prevent us from being decisive in this matter.

When we have a look at the similarities, we may first of all establish that both formulas have the indirect, impersonal form. Second, both formulas of renunciation share—besides the introductory 'I abjure/renounce' (ܟܦܪ ܐܢܐ)—the terms 'his angels' (ܘܠܡܠܐܟܘܗܝ) and 'his service' (ܬܫܡܫܬܗ). The order of these terms is also noteworthy; all other sources that have both these terms[197] witness the order service-angels, while the sequence in Theodore and Narsai[198] is the reverse, i.e. angels-service.

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197   The *Apostolic Constitutions*, Proclus, the *Euchologion*, and Chrysostom's formula from Constantinople (see n183 above).

198   The same order is also found in 22,359:39; *s* :23–24.

The following clear differences may be noted. Firstly, both formulas contain terms not present in the other. Terms present in Theodore, but not in Narsai are 'spectacle' (ܣܕܪܐ) and 'worldly error' (ܐܠܥܘܒ ܥܠܡܢܝܬܐ). Included in Narsai, but not in Theodore are the terms 'power' (ܚܝܠܐ) and 'error' (ܛܥܝܘܬܐ). Since ܐܠܥܘܒ and ܛܥܝܘܬܐ stem from the same root (ܛܥܐ) and are similar in meaning[199]—Narsai himself employs the former as a synonym of the latter[200]—we might conjecture that Narsai is indebted to Theodore here, but adapted the form to fit in his twelve syllable pattern. Since, however, the terms cover different practices and Theodore's ܐܠܥܘܒ is lacking in Narsai, this seems highly unlikely. Secondly, unlike Narsai's, Theodore's terms are preceded by the adjective 'all' (ܟܠ), like in ܘܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܠܐܟܘܗܝ.

When we weigh all the evidence, it becomes clear that the formulas of the *apotaxis* differ markedly and that Narsai's formula is anything but a simple copy of Theodore's. But even the similarities do not necessarily imply a dependency, since they could also be ascribed to a common tradition. The likelihood of such a scenario increases when we reaise that the (only) two shared terms, 'his angels' and 'his service', appear frequently in the Eastern formulas. The specific order of these terms could point to a similar subtradition (or be a mere coincidence).

Unfortunately, we remain ignorant of the exact form of Narsai's formula of *syntaxis*, though it may have been Trinitarian like Theodore's. The similarity between Narsai's "(confession of) faith in the Maker (ܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܒܪܘܝܐ)"[201] and *AR*'s "confession of the Creator" (ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܒܒܪܘܝܐ)[202] may indicate a dependency of Narsai on *AR*, or point to a common tradition. We may remind ourselves here that we have earlier established another possible dependence on *AR* regarding the terms "dominion of the Evil One" (ܫܘܠܛܢܗ ܕܒܝܫܐ) and "battle" (ܩܪܒܐ), which are both attested within Narsai's account of the renunciation.[203] We must quickly add, though, that this concerns only the wording, since the concepts of a 'battle with Satan' and the candidate being under 'evil dominion' are also widely testified in Theodore.[204]

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199   Payne Smith, 169b and 178b.

200   In his 'formula', Narsai uses ܛܥܝܘܬܐ (*S* 22,359:10) but in his discussion of the term he employs ܐܠܥܘܒ (*S* 22,361:12).

201   22,359:21; *S* :13.

202   *AR* 3; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 32–33.

203   See p. 178–179.

204   For the 'battle with Satan', see e.g. 2,28:16–17 (1,19; *S* 1,157:4–5); 2,30:27–28 (1,22; *S* 1,159:17); 2,31:3–4 (1,22; *S* 1,159:21–22); 2,33:5 (1,26; *S* 1,161:23–24). For Satan's 'dominion' (ܫܘܠܛܢܐ) over mankind, see e.g. 1,27:26 (1,18; *S* 1,156:8); 1,28:1 (1,18; *S* 1,156:15); 1,28:8 (1,18; *S* 1,156:22). See also the discussion concerning the 'exorcisms' on p. 139 ff above.

When we turn our attention to the *interpretation* of the terms, we may note the following. Theodore identifies three classes of Satan's 'angels': pagan, heretical, and Judaistic. These three groups are also in view in his discussion of 'service', while 'spectacle' and 'worldly error' (also) refer to paganism. With Narsai, the situation is remarkably different. Although he briefly touches upon 'pagan practices' in his description of Satan's 'invention' and 'error', the two terms he devotes most attention to, viz. Satan's 'angels' and their 'service', concern only the heresies. On the whole, then, Narsai is contesting paganism much less than Theodore and is completely silent on Judaism or Judaizing tendencies. What may be the cause of this different focus? Why has Narsai completely narrowed the category of 'angels' to the heresies? We may conjecture that for Narsai, an adherent of a suppressed 'heretical' sect himself, the internal (Christological) discussions of his time were far more important than attacking (a declining) paganism or the Jews.[205] Another factor contributing to the milder tone of Narsai's polemics against the Jews in general, as compared to that of some of his Western contemporaries, may be that miaphysites like Jacob of Sarug employed the term 'Jew' also as a sobriquet for the dyophysite Christology which—through their eyes—was dangerously close to Judaism.[206]

Narsai's description of Satan's 'invention' (ܡܫܟܚܘܬܐ) is quite similar to Theodore's 'pomp', i.e. his 'worldly error' (ܛܥܝܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܛܥܝܘܬܐ). They fully agree on the terms ܩܘܪܩܣܐ ('circus') and ܐܣܛܕܝܘܢ ('stadium' or 'racecourse').[207] Furthermore, Theodore's ܬܐܛܪܘܢ[208] and Narsai's ܒܝܬ ܚܙܘܐ[209] may both mean 'theatre',[210] and also ܙܡܝܪ̈ܐ[211] ('profane songs') and ܩܠܐ ܕܥܢ̈ܝܬܐ ܕܙܡܝܪ̈ܬܐ[212] ('riotous sounds of the songs') have a similar meaning. Narsai's description is much shorter, however, and lacks Theodore's 'contests of the athletes' (ܐܓܘܢܐ ܕܐܬܠ̈ܝܛܐ), 'water organs' (ܗܘܕܪ̈ܘܠܐ), and 'dances' (ܪܩܕܐ). Nevertheless, all the terms of Narsai's 'invention' literally or at least materially agree with Theodore's 'worldly error' and the similarities between the two are therefore much greater than those between Narsai's account and Cyril's or Chrysostom's 'pomp', where we only find an agreement on the 'theatre' and the 'stadium' (or 'horseracing').[213]

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205 Cf. Frishman, "Palm Festival—Against the Jews," 228.

206 Ibid., 228–229.

207 See Theodore *s* 2,173:14 and Narsai *s* 22,361:11.

208 *s* 2,173:14.

209 *s* 22,361:11.

210 Payne Smith, 136b and 602b.

211 *s* 2,173:15.

212 *s* 22,361:11–12.

213 Chrysostom describes 'pomp' as "Every form of sin, spectacles of indecency (θέατρα παρα-

Narsai's 'error' (ܛܘܥܝܐ), which he defines as "soothsayings and witch-crafts of all sorts—eye-winking and ear-tickling and street accosting", has some overlap with Theodore's 'service' (ܬܫܡܫܬܐ), which, besides other categories, also includes all kinds of superstitious acts.

So far, we have found some similarities concerning the explanation of the terms of the *apotaxis*, which may indicate an influence of Theodore on Narsai. Yet, a major clue that undoubtedly confirms a dependence on Theodore—and thus puts the earlier established similarities (regarding interpretation) within perspective—is revealed by a comparison of the way both mystagogues inter-pret Satan's 'angels'. Although, as established above, Narsai only applies the 'angels' to heretics and not to pagans and Jews, the way in which he does so strikingly resembles Theodore's account. Both give an enumeration of seven heretical figures which disagree only on one name: instead of 'Marcion', Nar-sai has 'Eutyches', a contemporary protagonist in the Christological debates. Interestingly, Narsai replaced the name instead of expanding the list and so retained the number of *seven* names. Most likely, the number seven has to be taken symbolically here. It was not uncommon for early Christian writers to use the mythical (seven-headed) hydra as an image for the heretics, express-ing their relatedness. John Cassian, for example, compares the heresies to the hydra of the poets and lists seven heretics—which only partly overlap with Theodore's and Narsai's lists, however—probably referring to the seven heads of the mythical monster.[214] So, the usage of listing a symbolic number of seven heretics has a broader atttestation and we cannot exclude the possibility that Narsai was already familiar with it before he read Theodore. Nevertheless, the application of the symbolism to the term 'Satan's angels' of the *apotaxis* seems

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νομίας), horse racing (ἱπποδρομίαι), gatherings filled with laughter and abusive language. Portents, oracles, omens, observances of times, tokens, amulets, and incantations ..." (*PK* 3.25; ed. Kaczynski, I, 244 (=2/3,6); tr. Harkins, 168; cf. *MF* 2.52; ed. Kaczynski, I, 144 (=1,19); tr. Harkins, 189 where Chrysostom gives a similar, but much shorter description). 'Cyril's' 'pomp' are "a passion for the theatre (θεατρομανίαι), horse-races (ἱπποδρομίαι), hunting and all other such vain pursuits ..." (*MC* 1.6; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 102; tr. Yarnold, 170).

214   Cassian, *De incarnatione contra Nestorium* 1–2 (ed. Migne, *PL* 50, cols. 11–20; tr. *NPNF* II/11, 551–552). He lists Ebion, Sabellius, Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, Photinus, and Apollinar-ius. Only Arius, Eunomius, and Apollinarius are shared with Theodore and Narsai. The fact that Cassian does not limit himself to discussing these seven heretics, confirms that they symbolise all heresies. Cf. Epiphanius, *Penarion* 30,1,1; 66,88,4; cf. Rev. 12:3. Curtin, *Bap-tismal Liturgy*, 136–137 offers a different approach. He relates the number seven to Luke 11:26 and Matt. 12:45 were seven evil spirits are mentioned. The preference of the demons for "waterless places" (Luke. 11:24; Matt. 12:43) would make the narrative fit for a baptismal application.

unique for Theodore and Narsai, and especially the similarity of names suggests a heavy dependence of the latter on the former here. The order of the names is different, however. Besides 'Mani', whom Theodore places before 'Marcion', his list is neatly chronological: Mani, Marcion, Valentinus, Paul of Samosata, Arius, Eunomius, and Apollinarius. Narsai clearly took Theodore's order as a starting-point, but adapted it in two places. Firstly, he added 'Eutyches', the substitute for 'Marcion' at the end of the list and shifted 'Paul' backwards, yielding the following order: Mani, Valentinus, Arius, Eunomius, Apollinarius, Paul, and Eutyches. Especially because he put 'Eutyches', the most recent figure at the end of the list, we may wonder why Narsai deliberately abandoned the chronological sequence concerning 'Paul'. It may be that this better fitted his twelve syllable pattern.

5.5   Conclusion

On the level of the performance of the ritual the differences clearly outweigh and eclipse the similarities. Narsai's *apotaxis/syntaxis* is interrupted by the Lawsuit ('exorcism'), while Theodore's ritual is preceded by the penitential prayer. Also the bodily movements differ: Theodore's candidate kneels during the whole ritual and is in a praying posture, while Narsai's baptizand probably makes the renunciation in a standing and the profession in a kneeling position (nothing is said about a praying posture). It is possible that Narsai's ritual contained a turning from West to East between the *apotaxis* and *syntaxis*. Such a ritual turning is highly unlikely in Theodore, however, since the baptizand remains in the same kneeling position during the whole liturgy. The formulas of the *apotaxis* are clearly different; the impersonal form of both formulas and the overlap of the terms 'his angels' and 'his service' may be attributed to a common tradition. A comparison of the formulas of the *syntaxis* is impossible, since Narsai does not provide the wording. On the whole, then, there are no good reasons to suppose that Narsai's ritual would be dependent on Theodore's. Therefore, it is most likely that his liturgical homilies reflect the ritual of renunciation and adherence as it was performed in his (local) church, shaped by a particular East Syrian tradition.

Things are different on the level of mystagogy, however. The identification of 'Satan's angels' with the symbolic number of seven heretics yields what may be called the clearest indication that Narsai was familiar with and used Theodore's catechetical homilies. Especially because the lists agree on six out of seven names and Narsai only replaced Marcion for the more current Eutyches. At the same time, however, the interpretation of the 'angels' shows a marked dif-

ference, since of Theodore's tripartite classification of heretical, pagan, and Judaistic angels, Narsai is only concerned with the first.

Besides a possible dependence on *AR*, Narsai critically and selectively used Theodore's baptismal homilies regarding the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, but only regarding its mystagogy. Particularly Narsai's adaptation of the list of heretics and his decreased interest in opposing pagan and Judaistic tendencies, may indicate the different historic-religious background against which he was working.

PART 3

Rituals of the Mystery/ies

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CHAPTER 6

The Signing on the Forehead

6.1 Theodore of Mopsuestia

6.1.1 *Description and Discussion of the Ritual*

As a visual depiction of the beginning of the ʾrāza, the bishop appears in a special linen costume (ܟܐܪܐ ܕܒܘܨܐ):

> When you have, therefore, made your promises and engagements, the priest draws near to you, wearing, not his ordinary garments or the covering with which he was covered before, but[1] clad in a robe of clean and radiant linen …[2]

Based on its fabric (linen),[3] the custom of the time to wear white clothing at celebrations and religious ceremony,[4] and the Church's adoption of such official dress for clerical use,[5] it may not seem unwarranted to conjecture that the

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1 "but clad in a robe of clean and radiant linen" is Mingana's contraction of the more elaborate phrase: "but instead of the outward covering he is normally covered with (ܐܠܐ ܚܠܦ ܬܟܣܝܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܠܒܪ ܗܘ ܗܢܐ ܕܡܥܕ ܗܘ, clad in a robe of clean and radiant linen …". Cf. T&D and BS: "mais, au lieu du vêtement que d'ordinaire il porte par-dessus, un ornement de lin délicat et resplendissant l'enveloppe …"; "sondern anstelle des äußerlichen Gewandes, das er sonst zu tragen pflegt, ist er in ein reines und strahlendes Gewand aus Linnen gehüllt …".

2 2,45:31–34 (2,17); S 2,176:12–16.

3 Outer garments like the *tunica* and *dalmatica* (a variant of the *tunica* with long wide sleeves) were mostly made of wool or linen (*tunica linea*) (Pausch, *Römische Tunika*, 181; Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion*, 19). An important difference between the two textiles is that wool is much easier to dye. For this reason, linen garments were usually undyed (greyish brown) or bleached white (Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion*, 25; Sebesta, "Tunica Ralla, Tunica Spissa," 66, 72), the latter of which was certainly preferred, "the more brilliant the better" (Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion*, 19).

4 It was customary to wear white clothing at celebrations (Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion*, 27; Marriott, *Vestiarium Christianum*, xvii), birthdays (Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion*, 27; Quasten, "Pythagorean Idea", 208n3), religious ceremonies (Marriott, *Vestiarium Christianum*, xvii; 176; Mayo, *Ecclesiastical Dress*, 12), or to show someone's purity (Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion*, 27). Also the priests of Isis and its followers were dressed in white (Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion*, 83).

5 During the fourth and following centuries, the occasional dress of the time, i.e. the ankle-length *manicata*, the *dalmatica*, and the *colobium* (like the *dalmatica*, but sleeveless) became adopted by the Church as appropriate dress for the clergy (Norris, *Church Vestments*, 16–17;

bishop's liturgical vestment was (basically) white, possibly with *clavi* (ποτα-
μοί)[6]. A further indication in the text seems to support such a view. It is said that
the clothes of the pontiff are "clean and radiant" (ܢܨܝܚ ܘܕܟܐ)[7]. The same
term 'radiant' is also applied to the baptismal garment (*tunica alba*) which the
neophyte is vested with after baptism. The candidate receives a "garment that is
wholly radiant (ܢܨܝܚ)",[8] "a white garment that shines (ܢܨܝܚ)".[9] This robe
"denotes the next world which is shining (ܡܒܗܪ) and radiant (ܢܨܝܚ)".[10]
The term ܢܨܝܚ (and the synonym[11] ܡܒܗܪ) clearly refers to the brightness
of the white garment here. From this we may deduce that the same quality of
the bishop's dress—its being radiant (ܢܨܝܚ)—in a similar way concerns its
white appearance. Interestingly, as the "pure and shining linen garment" is con-
trasted with the garment which the bishop was wearing before, it is likely that
the latter was not made of linen and/or brilliant white. For if it was, the liturgi-
cal meaning of the white linen garment would have been seriously blurred.

43–46; Mayo, *Ecclesiastical Dress*, 12, 16; Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion*, 38; Pausch,
Römische Tunika, 170; Bringemeier, *Priester- und Gelehrtenkleidung*, 10; Braun, *Liturgis-
che Gewandung*, 63–69, 249–255, 301; Macalister, *Ecclesiastical Vestments*, 24–59; Duch-
esne, *Christian Worship*, 379–398). This process had probably already begun in the pre-
Constantine era (Braun, *Liturgische Gewandung*, 767–771). A *paenula*—a poncho-like
cloak—could be worn over the tunic(s) as an outdoor garment, but also for Church rit-
ual (Norris, *Church Vestments*, 21, 26, 59; Mayo, *Ecclesiastical Dress*, 13–14). The earliest
graphic depiction of a bishop wearing a *tunica alba*, a *dalmatica* and a *paenula* is pre-
sented by the mosaic of Ambrose (ca. 339–397) in the oratory of San Vittori in Ciel d'Oro
(incorporated in the Basilica di San Ambrogio in Milan), dating from the fifth century
(Norris, *Church Vestments*, 17. For an image of the mosaic, see "Sacello di San Vittore").
Given the general esteem for white clothes in antiquity, it comes as no surprise that the
same colour also became preferable for clerical dress (Marriott, *Vestiarium Christianum*,
xvi–xxxiv; Appendix A and B, 175–192. Mayo, *Ecclesiastical Dress*, 12, 15. *RAC*, s.v. "Farbe",
421–422; Braun, *Liturgische Gewandung*, 258, 754–760; Papas, *Geschichte der Messgewän-
der*, 50, 74). (Frescos and mosaics show that the *clavi* were usually retained.) Nevertheless,
white was certainly not the only possible colour for clerical clothing (Braun, *Liturgische
Gewandung*, 754–760). In Constantinople, Palestine, and Syria, for example, monks and
clergy could also be dressed in black (for Constantinople, see Bingham, *Origines Ecclesi-
asticae*, 209; for Syria and Palestine, see *RAC*, s.v. "Farbe", 424). Apart from the *clavi* (see
n6), the garments were ordinarily undecorated (Braun, *Liturgische Gewandung*, 778).

6   A common type of decoration consisting of two vertical stripes on the front and the back
       of the tunic, and on the sleeves (Pausch, *Römische Tunika*, 111). Other stripe-like ornaments
       were the *lora*, *leria*, *limbus*, and *instita* (Pausch, *Römische Tunika*, 127–129).

7   *T&D*: "délicat et resplendissant"; *BS*: "reines und strahlendes".

8   3,68:1–2 (3,26); *S* 3,201:26–202:1.

9   3,68:12–13 (3,27); *S* 3,202:11.

10   3,68:2–3 (3,26); *S* 3,202:1.

11   Compare Payne Smith, 457a (ܢܨܝܚ) with 56b (ܡܒܗܪ).

The signing on the forehead itself, directly following the renunciation and adherence, is described by Theodore thus:[12]

> And he signs (ܪܫܡ) you on your forehead with the holy Chrism (ܡܫܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ) and says: "So-and-so is signed (ܡܬܪܫܡ) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." …[13]
>
> Immediately after your godfather, who is standing behind you, spreads an orarium of linen on the crown of your head, raises you and makes you stand erect.[14]

Mingana's 'holy Chrism' is clearly a mistranslation.[15] There has been much confusion among scholars over how to render ܡܫܚܐ and the term has often been translated inadequately by 'myron' or 'chrism'.[16] However, the term ܡܫܚܐ (ἔλαιον) stands for '(olive) oil'[17] and ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ is best rendered with 'oil of anointing',[18] elsewhere called 'oil of baptism' (ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ).[19] We may remind here that it remains unclear whether Theodore's rite contained a consecration of the oil.[20]

The pre-baptismal anointing of the head is commonly called ܪܘܫܡܐ ('sign,' 'mark', 'token', 'signing with the sign of the cross'),[21] but also ܛܒܥܐ ('seal, sign',

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12   Cf. the introduction of baptismal homily 3 (3,48:26–49:27 (3,1); s 3,180:1–181:5).

13   2,46:5–8 (2,17); s 2,176:23–24.

14   2,47:14–16 (2,19); s 2,178:11–13.

15   Taken over by Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 131.

16   Winkler, "Original Meaning," 61; Brock, "Syrian Baptismal Ordines," 180.

17   Winkler, "Original Meaning," 61; Brock, "Syrian Baptismal Ordines," 180; Varghese, *Onctions*, 99; cf. Payne Smith, 305b. The way the relevant Greek terms are translated in the Syriac Bible is very instructive in this respect. Although the old Syriac versions sometimes render μύρον with ܡܫܚܐ (Klein, *Syrisch-Griechisches Wörterbuch*, 67b) the Peshitta, as a rule, renders ἔλαιον with ܡܫܚܐ (Matt. 25:3, 4, 8; Mark 6:13; Luke 7:46, 10:34, 16:6; Heb. 1:9; James 5:14; Rev. 6:6, 18:13) and μύρον with ܒܣܡܐ (Matt. 26:12; Mark. 14:3, 4; Luke 7:37, 38, 23:56; John 11:2, 12:3). Two times μύρον is translated with ܡܫܚܐ ܕܒܣܡܐ (Matt. 26:7; Luke 7:46) and once with ܡܘܪܘܢ (Rev. 18:13). The only notable occurrence is John 12:3, where ܡܫܚܐ renders μύρον. Therefore, Theodore's ܡܫܚܐ most probably renders an original ἔλαιον. Chrysostom, however, speaks of 'chrism' (χρῖσμα) with reference to the pre-baptismal signing, being a mixture of olive oil (ἔλαιον) and unguent (μύρον) (PK 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 (= 2/3,7); tr. Harkins, 169). Cyril uses χρῖσμα for the post-baptism anointing (MC 3.5–6; ed. Röwekamp, MC, 128, 130; tr. Yarnold, 177–178).

18   Cf. BS: "Öl der Salbung" and T&D: "l'huile d'onction". The same term ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ is used for the oil of the second anointing in Theodore (3,54:14 (3,8); s 186:8).

19   3,49:1 (3,1); s 3,180:3.

20   See p. 79.

21   2,46:6 (2,17; s 2,177:6); 2,47:1 (2,18; s 2,178:2); 2,47:9 (2,19; s 2,178:7); 2,47:11 (2,19; s 2,178:10); 2,47:20 (2,19; s 2,178:16); 3,49:13 (3,1; s 3,180:15); 3,49:25 (3,2; s 3,181:3). Cf. Payne Smith, 536a.

'signet', 'stamp').[22] The related verbs are ܪܫܡ ('to sign', 'make the sign of the cross')[23] and ܛܒܥ ('to imprint a seal', 'to mark, sign, seal').[24] Contrary to the anointing of the whole body, the signing on the forehead is never called just ܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ.[25] The related verb ܡܫܚ ('to anoint') is also only employed for the second anointing.[26] The Greek equivalents of ܪܫܡ and ܪܘܫܡܐ are σφραγίζειν and σφραγίς, which may be assumed in the Greek original.[27] Ysebaert, who has examined and described the development of σφραγίς and its derivatives in the early centuries, has established that, although at first these terms referred to baptism itself, by the time of Theodore and Chrysostom they "are used to refer to rites of imposition of hands and anointing in the form of a cross" in the rite of baptism and other rituals.[28] Chrysostom explicitly says concerning the first

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22 2,46:28 (2,18; *s* 2,177:17); 2,46:32 (2,18; *s* 2,177:21); 2,47:32 (2,20; *s* 2,178:25). Cf. Payne Smith, 167a.

23 2,46:16 (2,17; *s* 2,177:7); 2,47:8 (2,19; *s* 2,178:8); 2,47:27 (2,19; *s* 2,178:21); 3,48:27 (3,1; *s* 3,180:3); 3,49:12 (3,1; *s* 3,180:15). Cf. Payne Smith, 551a.

24 2,46:17 (2,17; *s* 2,177:7). Cf. Payne Smith, 166b. Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 315 suggests that the alternation between ܪܫܡ and ܛܒܥ "may have been chosen merely to avoid the root *ḥtm*, although it might also translate χαρακτήρ, τύπος, or στίγμα, and derivatives".

25 For its use concerning the anointing of the body, see 3,54:18, 28 (3,8); *s* 186:11, 20. Cf. Winkler, "Original Meaning," 62.

26 2,54:14, 30 (3,8); *s* 186:8, 21.

27 See Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 416–418, 313, but especially 315. One would expect ܚܬܡ and ܚܬܡܐ as the equivalents of σφραγίς and derivatives, but these terms seem to have been avoided with reference to the pre-baptismal anointing in the beginning. Ysebaert says about this phenomenon: "The explanation may lie in the fact that these terms indicate in the main that something is closed with a seal or even without a seal and a metaphorical use in the Christian sense would conjure up the wrong image." (p. 416). Ephrem seems to be the first to use ܚܬܡ alongside the common terms (pp. 314, 418). Cf. Van Vossel, "Sceau," 252.

28 Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 418, 420. For the fuller discussion, see pp. 408–420. See also Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 54–69; cf. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1356a–b and Payne Smith, 536a. The whole idea of sealing the forehead ultimately goes back to Ezek. 9:4 and Rev. 9:4 (cf. 7:2 ff.), where it is said that the true believers carry God's mark on their forehead. Interestingly, the 'mark' in Ezek. 9:4 is literally the letter *taw* (תו), which in the old Hebrew script was written in the form of a plus sign or cross. Because of this resemblance, Origen, when inquiring after the meaning of this *taw*, received the answer from a Christ-believing Jewish scholar that the mark refers to the cross-sign which the Christians regularly make on their forehead (Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 415). Brock, "Transition," 219 mentions that, according to the Talmud, priests were anointed on their forehead with a *chi*, a letter which also resembles a cross. He suggests that this phenomenon may have motivated the replacement of the Jewish circumcision by the Christian signing on the forehead. See further p. 233–234 below.

pre-baptismal anointing that the candidates are marked on their forehead with the sign of the cross.[29] It seems that Theodore refers to the same practice.[30]

After the signing, the sponsor spreads an "orarium of linen" (ܟܬܢܐ ܐܘܪܪܐ)[31] on the candidate's head and raises him to his feet. The *orarium* (or *orarion*) was a large linen napkin (about the size of a towel) which Roman servants and slaves carried over their left shoulder and was used to clean vessels and all kinds of culinary utensils.[32] Probably not earlier than in the fourth century, the *orarium* was introduced into the Church, first in the East and only later in the West.[33] Originally, the deacon used the *orarium* "to clean the Eucharistic vessels and to wipe the minister's face and hands".[34] In time, however, it evolved from a practical utensil into a distinctive ornament of the deacon.[35] With reference to the Eucharist, Theodore provides the following information about the deacon's *orarium*:

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29   ... εὐθέως σφραγίζεσθαι κελεύει καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου δίδωσί σοι τὸν σταυρόν (*PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 (= 2/3,7); tr. Harkins, 169). Another phrase of interest is found in the *Apostolic Constitutions* where it is said that "the water [is] in place of the entombment, the oil [is] in place of the Holy Spirit, *the seal* [*is*] *in place of the cross* (ἡ σφραγὶς ἀντὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ), and the chrism confirms the confession." (III,17,1; ed. Metzger, II, 158; tr. Grisbrooke, 64 (italics mine)). Although the reference is more indirect here, the fact that the seal represents the cross may well suggest that the sign was made in the form of a cross (cf. Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 126 and especially n331 below).

30   Cf. Dölger, "Geschichte des Kreuzzeichens," 10–12; Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 73; Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 218; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 111–115.

31   2,47:15 (2,19); *S* 2,178:12.

32   Baumgarten, *Vestments for all Seasons*, 14b; Norris, *Church Vestments*, 88.

33   Norris, *Church Vestments*, 88–89; Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, 390 ff. In canon 21–22, the Council of Laodicea "forbids the subdeacon to undertake any of the functions of the deacon, to touch the sacred vessels, or to wear a stole [*orarium*, NW]" (Landon, *Manual of Councils*, 319). Cf. Payne Smith, 8b.

34   Baumgarten, *Vestments for all Seasons*, 14b.

35   Norris, *Church Vestments*, 88–89 summarises the development: "This napkin was first folded lengthways—contabulatum—probably about the end of the fourth century, or even later. By this means its width was reduced to about 4 or 3 inches, and its length increased to anything from 8 to 10 feet, its edges being parallel throughout. Through this change into a long band, it lost its utility, but retained its significance, and so became an ornament distinctive of the deacon." Possibly the oldest depiction of a deacon wearing the *orarium* is presented by the fifth-century mosaic of Soueida. The scene shows Sergios the deacon wearing a light-coloured (yellowish) *tunica talaris* with over his left shoulder, reaching to his knee, a white *orarium* with black borders (Reine, *Eucharistic Doctrine*, 71 and plate 1) The size of the *orarium*—long and narrow—makes clear that it had no practical function anymore.

They also have a dress, appropriate for this matter, which is more lofty than their own outer garment, as this dress (ܐܣܟܡܐ) is fitting for those who serve.[36] They place on their left shoulders a stole (ܐܘܪܪܐ)[37] which floats equally on either side, forwards and backwards. This is a sign that they are not performing a ministry of servitude but of freedom, as they are ministering to things that lead to freedom all those who are worthy of the great house of God, that is to say the Church. They do not place the stole on their neck in a way that it floats on either side but not in front, because there is no one serving in a house who wears such an apparel; it is only those who are masters of themselves and remote from servitude of any kind who wear it in this way, but the deacons place it on their shoulders because they are appointed for service. The stole is their only sign of that freedom to which all of us, who believed in Christ, have been called; and we hasten to go to, and be in, "the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," as the blessed Paul says; and they are clearly appointed for the service of all things performed in it.[38]

Theodore contrasts the deacon's custom of wearing the *orarium* with that of freemen. The latter wear the *orarium* on their neck in such a way that the two ends are hanging parallel in front, while the deacons wear it on their left shoulder with one end hanging in front and the other on the back. Although the deacon wears the *orarium* servant-style, it is still a sign of freedom "as they are ministering to things that lead to freedom all those who are worthy of the great house of God, that is to say the Church". In a similar way, all Christians are called to this 'service of freedom'.

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36   This is my own translation of the Syriac: ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܘܬ ܗܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܟܕ ܡܝ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܗ ܐܣܟܡܐ ܕܦܐܐ ܠܡܕܐ ܕܗܘܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ : ܕܝܠܗ ܕܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ ܩܠܝܠ. ܕܡܠܟ ܕܡܫܡܫܝܢ. My rendering agrees with that of *BS*. Mingana renders: "They have also an apparel which is consonant with their office, since their outer garment is taller than they are, as wearing such an apparel in such a way is suitable to those who serve." Mingana's "since their outer garment is taller than they are" is clearly a mistranslation. But together with *BS* I also disagree with *T&D* who translate the critical phrase as: "parce que plus sublime qu'eux est leur vêtement extérieur".

37   Greek: ὀθόνη. Mingana's "stole" is clearly an anachronism (see Baumgarten, *Vestments for all seasons*, 14b).

38   xv,84:24–85:10 (XV,23); *S* XV,221:7–222:3. The way Theodore clarifies the appropriate way for the deacons to wear the *orarium*—by referring to everyday custom—may indicate that it had not yet completely lost its practical function, but not necessarily so. It is equally possible that Theodore only employs the reference as an argument for suitable dress of ecclesiastical servants, without implying its utility.

Interestingly, the *orarium* which is spread on the candidate's head after the signing is not compared to that of deacons, but to that of freemen for whom the privilege of covering the head with linen "serves ... as an adornment both in the house and in the market-place".[39] This time, however, the cloth is spread on the head, not on the neck. But is this really a difference? Could it be that the *orarium* was normally worn on the neck with the ends hanging in front and was from there pulled over the head whenever desired? If so, we have two supplementary descriptions here of the same praxis, the symbol of which became ritualised in Theodore's rite. Interestingly, the ritual of the spreading of the *orarium* on the candidate's head is not witnessed by other early writers and therefore Theodore seems to be unique in this.[40]

Discussing the *apotaxis*, we have established that the way in which the candidates are addressed—in the singular or in the plural—is an indicator of whether the ritual is performed individually or groupwise.[41] The signing on the forehead is clearly performed individually as each candidate is personally signed by the bishop. In like manner as in the foregoing rituals, this feature of the ritual is sustained by the way in which the baptizands are accosted. So, it is said e.g.: "And he signs you (ܠܟ) on your forehead (ܒܝܬ ܥܝܢܝܟ) ..."[42] and "Immediately after your godfather (ܥܪܒܟ), who is standing behind you (ܣܬܪܟ), spreads an orarium of linen on the crown of your head (ܩܘܩܬܟ), raises you (ܠܟ) and makes you (ܠܟ) stand erect."[43] and "After you have been

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39   2,47:29–31 (2,19); *s* 2,178:23–24.

40   Cf. Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 231. Some rituals come close, however. John the Deacon, in his letter to a certain Senarius (ca. 500 AD), wherein he discusses the Roman baptismal rite, mentions that after baptism "[f]or a fuller expression of the idea of priesthood, the head of the neophyte is dressed in linen array for priests of that time used always to deck the head with a certain mystic covering" (Whitaker, 211; cf. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 109–110). In *AR* 14, it is said that "The crowns placed on the heads of those baptized signify the freedom they have received from Christ" (Brock, "Commentaries," 44–45). Yet, although the ritual in *AR* 14 has interesting similarities with Theodore's in that something that signifies freedom is placed on the head, the difference is that it is not spoken of *oraria* (ܐܘܪܪܐ), but of 'crowns' (ܟܠܝܠܐ), which suggests a different item (cf. Payne Smith, 216a). Because Meyers, "Structure," 37n5 wrongly takes the 'crown' of *AR* 14 for an *orarium*, she is able to remark concerning Theodore's rite that "[i]n this liturgy, an anointing has been combined with the signing which took place at the ritual of renunciation/adherence, while the *orarium* has not yet been shifted to its later place amongst post-baptismal rites". But this does not seem justified in light of the difference between a 'crown' and an *orarium*.

41   See p. 184.

42   2,46:5 (2,17); *s* 2,176:23.

43   2,47:14–16 (2,19); *s* 2,178:11–13.

singled out (ܐܬܦܪܫ) and stamped (ܐܬܛܒܥ) as a soldier of Christ our Lord you receive (ܡܩܒܠ) the remaining part of the mysteries …".[44]

6.1.2 *Function and Meaning of the Ritual*

The function of the signing seems somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, it forms the apex of the preceding ritual unit, which is concluded by the following rising and *orarium*. "After it there is a definite *caesura* before the next phase of the initiation begins …", as Riley puts it.[45] Because of this structuring, the anointing is closely related to the preceding rituals, especially the *apotaxis/syntaxis*. The signing not only fluently succeeds the renunciation/adherence, but is also experienced in the same kneeling posture. What is more, the signing is presented as the necessary consequence of the previous rituals:

> This is the reason why you have, through the promises and engagements which we have already described, directed your course towards Him and have promised to Him that you will make yourself worthy of the expected gift (ܡܘܗܒܬܐ). After you have looked towards Him with outstretched hands, asked grace from Him, risen from your fall and rejoiced in (future) benefits, you will necessarily (ܐܠܨܐܝܬ)[46] receive the firstfruits of the mystery …[47]

Since the term 'gift' in the overall majority of cases refers to 'baptism' in Theodore's baptismal homilies,[48] we may be quite sure that the same holds here.

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44   2,47:32–33 (2,20); *s* 2,178:25–26.

45   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 111.

46   Cf. Payne Smith, 18b.

47   2,45:22–29 (2,16); *s* 2,176:5–10.

48   'Gift' (ܡܘܗܒܬܐ) is usually used in the phrase 'gift of (holy) baptism': XI,16:3 (XI,19; *s* XI,142:9)); XI,16:6 (XI,19; *s* XI,142:12); 1,17:8 (1,1; *s* 1,123:21); 1,17:15–16 (1,1; *s* 1,144:4); 1,23:4 (1,11; *s* 1,150:22); 1,26:17 (1,16; *s* 1,154:22); 1,30:21–22 (1,21; *s* 1,159:12); 1,30:24–25 (1,22; *s* 1,159:14); 2,44:22–23 (2,14; *s* 2,175:3); 3,52:27 (3,6; *s* 3,184:15); 3,54:8 (3,8; *s* 3,186:3); 3,58:19 (3,13; *s* 3,191:9); 3,58:30 (3,14; *s* 3,191:18). In one instance it is employed in the phrase "the gift of the benefits of baptism" (3,61:28–29 (3,17; *s* 3,194:23). At other times, as in the passage under consideration, ܡܘܗܒܬܐ is used without 'baptism': "Divine gift" (ܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ) (1,33:2 (1,25; *s* 1,161:21)), "awe-inspiring gift" (ܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܕܚܝܠܬܐ) (2,38:30 (2,6; *s* 2,168:8)), or just "gift" (3,63:33 (3,20; *s* 3,197:11)). Especially the larger context of the latter locus is worth quoting in full as it makes clear that 'baptism' is surely the primary referent of ܡܘܗܒܬܐ: "This is the reason why, although each one of them [the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, NW] is able to confer *the gift* (ܡܘܗܒܬܐ)—as the baptism by which you are baptised in the name of each of them shows—yet we believe that we only receive a complete baptism when the call upon the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is finished." (3,63:31–36 (3,20; *s* 3,197:10–

By his abjuration of Satan and his contract with Christ, the baptizand has made himself worthy of the mystery of baptism. Being a confirmation of his achieved dignity and in anticipation of the full sacramental harvest, the candidate already receives its firstfruits by the anointing.

On the other hand—and this is where the paradox arises—there is not only a definite *caesura after* the signing, but also *between* the signing and the preceding rituals because it starts a new ritual phase, viz. the *ʾrāzā /ʾrāzē*:

> He offers you these firstfruits of the mysteries (ܪ̈ܐܙܐ ܪܫܝܬܐ), and he
> does it in no other way than in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
> and of the Holy Spirit. Where you expect to find *the cause of all the benefits*,
> there the priest also begins the mystery (ܡܫܪܐ ܠܟ ܥܒܕ ܪ̈ܐܙܐ). In fact,
> it is from there that the priest draws you near to the calling towards which
> you must look, and in consequence of which you ought to live above all
> things according to the will (of God).[49]

By the passive triune formula, "So-and-so is signed ..." the bishop initiates the mystery. Discussing the likewise passive baptismal formula in the next homily, Theodore explains:

> The priest places his hand on your head and says: "So-and-so is baptised
> in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and does
> not say "I baptise (So-and-so)," but "So-and-so is baptised"—in the same
> way as he had previously said "So-and-so is signed" and not "I sign So-and-
> so"—in order to show that as a man like the rest of men he is not able to
> bestow such benefits, which only Divine grace can bestow. This is the rea-
> son why he rightly does not say "I baptise" and "I sign" but "So-and-so is
> signed and baptised." In this he immediately refers to the One by whom
> a person is signed and baptised, namely "in the name of the Father, and
> of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and shows that *these are the cause of
> the things that happen to him*, and demonstrates that he himself is a sub-
> ordinate and a servant of the things that take place, and a revealer of *the
> cause which gives effect to them*.[50]

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15)) (italics mine). By baptism, the baptizand also receives the "gift of the Holy Spirit"
(ܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ ܩܘܕܫܐ) (3,53:35–54:1 (3,7; S 2,185:23)), which coalesces with the 'gift'
of baptism. Through this "gift of the Holy Spirit", the candidate receives the firstfruits of the
Spirit in anticipation of the fullness to be expected at the end of time. So, the signing is the
firstfruits of baptism and through baptism man acquires the firstfruits of the age to come.

49   2,46:9–16 (2,17); S 2,176:24–177:6 (italics mine).
50   3,59:27–60:5 (3,15); S 3,192:19–193:3 (italics mine); cf. 2,44:33–45:14 (2,15; S 2,175:12–24).

So, the formula is passive as it is the triune God himself who signs and is the Cause of the benefits bestowed upon the candidate. Since the uttering of the formula really *causes* something, the signing is a rite of transition. By the liturgical mystery the baptizand receives benefits he did not possess before. It may be that the candidate *gets access to* the 'firstfruits' by his renunciation and commitment, the 'firstfruits' themselves are only received by the signing. This is also clearly seen from the following passage:

> When the priest performs these things for you and signs you with a sign on your forehead, he *separates* you from the rest (ܗܢܐ ܓܘܚܒܠ ܡܢ ܟܠܗ) as a consequence of the aforesaid words [i.e. the formula of the signing, NW][51] (ܚܘܠܡ ܟܠܗ ܕܡܩܕܡ ܐܬܐܡܪ), and decides that you are the soldier of the true King and a citizen of heaven. The sign (with which you have been signed) demonstrates that you have communion with, and participation in, all these things.[52]

As the climax of the foregoing rituals and as a real 'rite de passage', the signing *separates* (ܦܪܫ) the catechumen from the non-initiated.[53] The same verb ܦܪܫ (ἀφορίζω) is also employed in Matt. 13:49 and 25:32 (cf. Lev. 20:24, 26; 1 Kings 8:53) concerning the separation of the righteous from the sinners.[54] In a similar decisive way, it is used by Theodore to signify the effect of the first anointing.

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51   From the context and Theodore's emphasis on the causative effect of the triune formula, it is rather clear that "the aforesaid words" concern the sacramental formula accompanying the signing. Although Riley does not explicitly say so, in the following passage he seems to wrongly suggest that "the aforesaid words" refer to the renunciation and profession: "The sign on his forehead indicates that the candidate now possesses what for Theodore is a key notion, 'confidence (παρρησία).' It is this confidence which comes to him as a result of his act of commitment, and the presence of which is indicated by the anointing on the forehead, a gift, the symbol of the first-fruits of the sacrament which gives the candidate free right of city in the heavenly world: 'When the priest performs these things for you and signs you with a sign on your forehead, he separates you from the rest as a consequence of the aforesaid words …'" (*Christian Initiation*, 126).

52   2,47:8–13 (2,19); *s* 2,178:7–11 (italics mine).

53   In 1,30:24–26 (*s* 1,159:14–15) Mingana's rendering says: "… through the gift of the holy baptism you are *separating* (ܠܒܕܝܢ) yourselves from the servitude of the Tyrant …". Although the idea expressed here is certainly related to the separation of the initiated from the non-initiated, one must note that the verb employed here is ܒܕܠ – which may also be translated with 'to withdraw' – instead of ܦܪܫ, and that the withdrawal is from Satan, not from the unbelievers.

54   It is noteworthy that the third hymn on Epiphany, traditionally attributed to Ephrem, similarly uses ܦܪܫ with reference to the pre-baptismal anointing: "… But you who are the flock, among the profane and unbelievers, the Truth by the *oil* (ܒܡܫܚܐ) is your *mark*

A strong visual indication that the mystery begins with the signing is seen in the bishop's special linen garment of which it is said that "the *newness* of its appearance denotes the *newness* of"[55] the future world, "and the shining colour" shows the candidate's "radiance in the life to come, while its cleanness indicates the ease and happiness of the next world."[56] In other words, the bishop's apparel "denotes the renovation found in the next world".[57] This liturgical vestment is worn by the pontiff during all subsequent rituals of the mysteries.[58] Theodore explains that the symbolism of the garment invokes a balance of fear and love (a 'holy love', so to speak) in the baptizand so that through the newness of the robe he becomes aware of the 'excellence' of the coming reality of which the garment is a symbol.[59]

(ܐ‌ܘܪܫܠܡ), to separate (ܢܦܪܫܟܘܢ) you from the strayed. From the peoples he separated (ܦܪܫ) the People, by the former *mark* (ܪܘܫܡܐ) of circumcision; but by the *mark* (ܪܘܫܡܐ) of anointing, the peoples He separates (ܦܪܫ) from the People. When the peoples were in error, the People He separated (ܦܪܫ) from the peoples; now when the People has erred from Him, He separates (ܦܪܫ) the peoples from thence. Of the dust of the pure soil, Naaman bore away and returned to his place; that he by this holy dust, might be separated (ܦܪܫ) and known from the unclean. The *oil* (ܡܫܚܐ) of Christ separates (ܦܪܫ), the sons of the mystery from strangers: and by it they that are within are separated (ܡܦܪܫܝܢ), and known from them that are without" (stanzas 3–5; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 147; tr. *ANF* 11/13, 269; words in italics are my own adaptations to bring the translation in closer harmony with the Syriac). The same hymn also contains an allusion to the separation of the sheep and the goats in Matt. 25:32: "Look on me also in Your mercy! Be not branded on me the *mark* (ܪܘܫܡܟܘܢ), of the goats the sons of the left hand! let not Your sheep become a goat!" (stanza 27; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 152; tr. *ANF* 11/13, 271). Theodore's use of ܦܪܫ (ἀφορίζω) seems to betray that he is working within a similar tradition as the author of the third hymn on Epiphany. (Most Epiphany hymns are not authentic, but may still be early and are 'Ephremic' in character, see Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 35–36; Seppälä, "Baptismal Mystery", 1141; Rouwhorst, "Noyau le plus ancien" asserts that hymn 3.1–22 is part of the authentic nucleus of the collection together with 4.1–17, 6, 8.1–21, 9, and 10.1–16.)

55   Mingana renders "the *joyful* appearance of which denotes the *joy* of the world to which you will move in the future" (my italics) but this is based on an error which crept into his Syriac text by misreading the original manuscript: ܚܕܘܬܐ instead of ܚܕܬܐ (f. 99ᵛ; *T&D*, p. 394). Cf. *T&D*: "et la nouveauté de son aspect (σχῆμα) manifeste la nouveauté de ce monde ou tu vas passer".

56   2,45:34–38 (2,17); *S* 2,176:16–19.

57   3,58:31–32 (3,14); *S* 3,191:19–20.

58   3,58:26–33 (3,14); *S* 3,191:15–20. See also the discussion on p. 52 f.

59   2,46:1–5 (2,17); *S* 2,176:20–22. Instead of 'excellence', Mingana speaks of 'power', but the former seems to be a better rendering of ܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ (Payne Smith, 270a). Cf. *T&D*: "l' excellence" and *BS*: "Erhabenheit". Where does the 'excellence' reside? Mingana's translation of the whole passage runs thus: "He depicts these things to you by means of the garments in which he is clad, and by the hidden symbol of the same garments he inspires you with fear, and with fear he infuses love into you, so that you may through the newness

All taken together, it seems that Theodore ingeniously exploited the structural paradox to develop the theological paradox of man's responsibility and God's grace. Man's side is expressed by the *apotaxis/syntaxis* by which he becomes worthy to receive the firstfruits. But only God's decisive act by means of the signing effectuates this potential, resulting in a definite new state. Yes, the signing is a necessary consequence of the preceding rituals, but not in the sense that it is nothing more than a mere confirmation of a position already taken by the candidate. The renunciation/adherence is the *condition*, the signing the direct *cause* of the baptizand's new status. Only after God himself has accepted him, man really becomes His own.

Riley overlooked this paradox by ignoring the sacramental character of the signing, and therefore its causative effect. He denies that the anointing "*brings about* the ownership of the candidate by Christ".[60] The signing would only be "an elucidation of the benefits which come as a result of" the *apotaxis/syntaxis*.[61] The reason why Riley missed the causative effect of the signing is probably that he read Theodore through the lens of Chrysostom.[62] In both the rites of Theodore and Chrysostom the signing directly follows the *apotaxis/syntaxis*. Yet, the important difference is (1) that Chrysostom explicitly states that the candidate has become Christ's own by the abjuration and commitment and (2) that although he employs a similar passive triune formula, he never mentions the sacramental character of the signing. In this way, its causative effect is lost and the signing is reduced to a ceremonial confirmation of the new status of the candidate as a result of the preceding rituals. But as we have seen above, Theodore's approach is strikingly different.

To sum up, the signing culminates the preceding ritual unit, but at the same time initiates the mystery. Although, as such, it may not be very uncommon for a ritual to look both backward and forward, it is especially the *position* of

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of his garments look into the power which it represents." The Syriac of the last phrase literally says: "so that through this newness (of the garment) you will regard that excellence" (ܗܢܐ ܢܚܙܐ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܗܘ ܕܠܗ ܡܪ ܒܚܕܬܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܢܚܘܪ). According to *T&D*, the "excellence" refers to the signing as a whole and so they render: "l'excellence de ce (rite)". It is my contention, however, that the sense of Mingana's translation "… which it represents" does more justice to Theodore's sacramental view in general and the context in particular. Since the passage under consideration still refers to the bishop's robe and its symbolism, the "excellence" most probably still concerns the "hidden symbol" of the garment. The garment is a symbol that introduces and connects the candidate to the coming reality which it represents.

60   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 113.
61   Ibid., 115.
62   Ibid., 113–115.

the signing which evokes this tension.[63] To begin the mystery at the end of a ritual unit has something awkward and all the more because, as it stands, the sequence of liturgical mysteries is disrupted by the rituals of the *orarium* and the rising. How could such a remarkable structure have been developed? It is worth mentioning Meyers'[64] suggestion here. She opines that when the renunciation/ adherence became part of the Syrian rite, it first concluded the period of formal preparation on Good Friday. At this stage, this rite "would have consisted of a renunciation of Satan, confession of faith, imposition of hands or signing on the forehead without anointing, and *orarium*." So, the *orarium* would originally have concluded a separate rite of *apotaxis/syntaxis*. When the preparatory rites became gradually joined to baptism itself, the renunciation/adherence shifted to Holy Saturday, and the sacramental signing was combined with the imposition of hands following the *apotaxis/syntaxis*, and concluded by the *orarium*.

Having drawn the broader framework by the above discussion of the position and function of the signing, we may now examine its meaning. The sign on the candidate's forehead stands for 'ownership' and '(military) service'. Theodore likens it to the brand of a sheep and the tattoo of a soldier:

> The sign (ܪܘܫܡܐ) with which you are signed (ܡܬܪܫܡܝܬ) means that you have been stamped (ܐܬܛܒܥܬ) as a lamb of Christ and as a soldier of the heavenly King. Indeed, immediately we possess a lamb we stamp it with a stamp which shows to which master it belongs, so that it may graze the same grass as that which the rest of the lambs of the owner graze, and be in the same fold as that in which they are. A soldier who has enlisted for military service, and been found worthy of this service of the State because of his stature and the structure of his body, is first stamped on his hand with a stamp which shows to which king he will henceforth offer his service; in this same way you also, who have been chosen for the Kingdom of Heaven, and after examination been appointed a soldier to the heavenly King, are first stamped on your forehead …[65]

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63   This tension is also reflected in Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 73: "From the candidate's purpose it would appear that this anointing is related to the previous rituals, but Theodore emphasizes that it does in fact mark a point of transition". But somewhat later, she remarks: "We see that this first anointing in Mopsuestia concludes and demonstrates the change in allegiance brought about by the renunciation and adherence".

64   Meyers, "Structure," 35–37.

65   2,46:16–28 (2,17–18); s 2,177:6–17.

The idea of the candidate being a soldier (ﬠﬥﬡ) performing military service (ﬠﬡﬠﬠﬥﬡ) is definitely the dominant one.[66] This theme is not only discussed more elaborately than the sheep image, but also, unlike the latter, repeated several times.[67] When Theodore concludes the second baptismal homily and summarises the effect of the signing, he only refers to the soldier image:

> After you have been singled out and stamped as a soldier of Christ our Lord you receive the remaining part of the mysteries and are invested with the complete armour of the Spirit, and with the mysteries you receive participation in the heavenly benefits.[68]

The same is true for Theodore's summary of the signing at the beginning of the third baptismal homily. Through the signing the candidate is "enlisted in the service (ﬠﬡﬠﬠﬥﬡ) of heaven".[69] While this theme is repeated several times here,[70] the sheep image is never mentioned.

Like a soldier who gets a tattoo on his hand,[71] the baptizand receives a mark on his forehead by which it is shown to Whom he belongs. The ﬠﬡﬠﬠﬡ is a mark of identity. To put this within a broader framework, it is interesting to have a look at the third hymn on Epiphany, traditionally attributed to Ephrem.[72] We have already seen that Theodore shares with this hymn a similar use of ﬠﬠﬡ (ἀφορίζω) pertaining to the pre-baptismal anointing.[73] In the same hymn the writer also draws a striking parallel between the sign of the old covenant and Christian anointing:

> From the peoples he separated the People,
> by the former *mark* (ﬠﬡﬠﬠﬡ) of circumcision (ﬠﬠﬡﬠ *sic*);[74]

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66   Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 94; Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 119. Although Brock is right that both Theodore and Narsai "put the image of 'branding sheep' into the background, giving prominence instead to that of providing the newly-enrolled soldier of Christ with an identity mark", we will see below (p. 290) that the sheep image is still more prominent in Narsai than in Theodore.

67   2,47:7 (2,18; *s* 2,178:6); 2,47:11 (2,19; *s* 2,178:9); 2,47:21 (2,19; *s* 2,178:17); 2,47:32 (2,20; *s* 2,178:25).

68   2,47:32–35 (2,20); *s* 2,178:25–179:1.

69   3,49:1 (3,1); *s* 3,180:4.

70   3,49:6 (3,1; *s* 3,180:8); 3,49:13 (3,1; *s* 3,180:15); 2,49:16 (3,1; *s* 3,180:18); 3,49:20 (3,1; *s* 3,180:21).

71   Cf. Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 422.

72   For some notes on authenticity, see n54 above.

73   See n54 above.

74   The hymn contains an interesting play on words between 'circumcision' (ﬠﬠﬡﬠ) and 'flock' (ﬠﬡﬠ). See e.g. stanzas 3–6. Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 120.

> but by the *mark* (ܪܘܫܡܐ) of anointing,
> the peoples He separates from the People ...
>> stanza 4[75]

> The anointing of the People was a foreshadowing of Christ;
> their rod a mystery of the Cross;
> their lamb a type of the Only begotten;
> their tabernacle a mystery of your Churches;
> their circumcision *a token of your mark* (ܐܬܐ ܕܗܝ ܪܘܫܡܟ).
> Under the shadow of your goodly thing, sat the People of old.
>> stanza 13[76]

This parallel between circumcision and anointing, which at first may seem surprising, becomes understandable when one realises that the early Syrian pattern of signing-baptism was "modelled on the Jewish rite for admitting proselytes, circumcision followed by baptism, with the circumcision replaced by an anointing ...",[77] a fact that "all early writers are very much aware of".[78] Because of this analogy between circumcision and anointing as type and antitype, the function and meaning of the former was transposed to the latter. Like its prototype, the signing became a mark of identity, a sign of ownership,[79] and a boundary marker.[80,81] As already noted above, the ܪܘܫܡܐ *separates* the believer

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75   Ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 147; tr. ANF 11/13, 269. Words or phrases in italics are my own adaptations to bring the translation in closer harmony with the Syriac.

76   Ibid., 149; ibid., 270.

77   Brock, "Transition," 219; cf. Rouwhorst, "Liturgical Mimesis"; idem, "Remarkable Case," 119–121. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 47 discards the relationship between Jewish proselyte initiation and the older Syrian pattern as "the Jewish practice may well post-date the Christian pattern". Yet, although Jewish proselyte baptism may post-date Christian baptism as such, this does not exclude the possibility that the early form of Syrian initiation took shape by interaction with the Jewish initiation pattern during the first centuries of its existence (Rouwhorst, "Remarkable Case," 108–112; 119 ff.; idem, "Liturgical Mimesis").

78   Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 48. The East Syrian ordo still contains this parallel between anointing and circumcision: "For you gave holy oil to men of old as a mark (*rushma*) and token of temporal priesthood and transient kingship, but now you have transmitted it to be a symbolic mark for those who move from things earthly to things heavenly, with an immortal body and incorruptible soul, being circumcised with a circumcision without hands, stripping off the flesh of sin at the circumcision that belongs to Christ ..." (idem, 79).

79   This also explains the cutting imagery applied to the oil (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 119–120). Narsai also draws parallels between the oil and a knife as will be shown below (p. 248).

80   Rouwhorst, "Remarkable Case," 120; idem, "Liturgical Mimesis".

81   It is noteworthy, however, that the author of the hymn acknowledges that the parallel is

from the unbelievers. Although the original relation between circumcision and anointing is lost in Theodore, the whole idea of 'ownership' and 'identity' is still very much present.

The reason why Theodore prefers the soldier image over the sheep image is probably that it provides a much better parallel and offers a choice opportunity to express the idea of 'serving the king' as well. A sheep may obediently follow the shepherd, but does not actively and consciously serve his master. The soldier image emphasises the active obedience expected of the candidate. His whole subsequent Christian life is supposed to be devoted to the King. But that is not all. The heavenly 'King'—'Christ the Lord'—ascended to heaven where He established his Kingdom.[82] If they endure,[83] the believers will one day move to that heavenly Kingdom and reign with Christ and share in His glory.[84] It is for this task that the baptizand has been signed and chosen for a kingly and heavenly service.[85] Ultimately, then, the ‏ܪܘܫܡܐ‎ is a 'royal mark'[86] and the eschatological Kingdom of Christ its point of reference.[87]

Besides the idea of ownership/identity, prominently expressed by the soldier image, the signing—combined with the *orarium* and the rising—picks up the theme of 'citizenship'. The candidate is not only a soldier, but also a "citizen of heaven"[88] and has to direct his "course to its life and citizenship while spurning all earthly things[89]". In this way, the signing also clearly harks back to the beginning of his liturgical journey, the ritual of the enrolment, by which the baptizand became registered for this heavenly citizenship. This confirms our earlier observation that Theodore considers the enrolment (and the following exorcisms) as an integral part of the whole rite of baptism.[90]

An important part of Theodore's mystagogy is related to the rationale for the signing *on the forehead*:

> ... you ... are first stamped on your forehead, that part of your head which is higher than the rest of your body, which is placed above all your body

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not perfect. Under the old covenant all men were circumcised, the just and the unjust alike, while under the new dispensation only the righteous are anointed (see stanza 25).

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82   3,49:2–5 (3,1); *s* 3,180:5–7.

83   Referring to 2 Tim. 2:12.

84   3,49:5–11 (3,1); *s* 3,180:8–14. With an appeal to John 17:24 and 2 Tim. 2:12.

85   3,49:11–14 (3,1); *s* 3,180:14–16.

86   Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 94–95.

87   Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 125–131.

88   2,47:11 (2,19); *s* 2,178:9–10.

89   2,47:22–23 (2,19); *s* 2,178:17–18.

90   See p. 71 f.

and above your face, and with which we usually draw near to one another
and look at one another when we speak. You are stamped at that place so
that you may be seen to possess great παρρησία[91] (ܪ̈ܒܘܬܐ). ... we are
rightly stamped in a place that is higher than our face, so that from far we
may frighten the demons, who will not then be able to come near us and
injure us, and so that we may be known to possess so much παρρησία with
God (ܘܒܗܕܐ ܢܬܝܕܥ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܢ ܪ̈ܒܘܬܐ ܣܓܝ ܠܘܬ ܐܠܗܐ) that we look at Him
with an open face, and display before Him (ܠܗ)[92] the stamp by which
we are seen to be members of the household and soldiers of Christ our
Lord.[93]

The key word here is παρρησία ("freedom of speech, confidence, boldness; lib-
erty, familiarity"),[94] an important term in Theodore's theology.[95] The basic
meaning of παρρησία is 'freedom of speech'[96] and in secular Greek it "is the
right of free citizens or the privilege of true friends".[97] Interestingly, the idea of
'civic freedom' is applied by Theodore to the city of God:

> After we have, by our profession of faith, made our contracts and engage-
> ments with God our Lord, through the intermediary of the priest, we
> become worthy to enter His house and enjoy its sight, its knowledge and
> its habitation, and to be also enrolled in the city and its citizenship. We
> then become the owners of a great παρρησία.[98]

However, Theodore does not apply παρρησία to inter-human relationships, but
restricts it "to the sphere of the relation between God and man".[99] Van Unnik

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91   Mingana renders παρρησία with 'confidence', but as the term is not easy to translate—
      Van Unnik opts for the more objective meaning of 'freedom' as we will see below—and in
      order to facilitate the discussion of its meaning in Theodore, I leave the term untranslated.

92   BS adds 'sc. dem Satan' in parentheses here, indicating that the referent here is not 'God',
      but 'Satan'. This is interesting, but hardly convincing. Satan is completely absent from the
      passage. Besides 'God', the only other possible referent is 'the demons'. But then we would
      have expected ܠܗܘܢ instead of ܠܗ.

93   2,46:26–47:7 (2,18); S 2,177:15–178:6.

94   Payne Smith, 458a; cf. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1044b–1045b.

95   See Van Unnik, Παρρησία. It is noteworthy that it is not the stamp as such (or its possible
      cross-form), but the παρρησία it stands for that is the subject of Theodore's mystagogy.

96   Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1044b.

97   Van Unnik, Παρρησία, 14; cf. Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 1044b.

98   1,34:11–16 (1,27); S 1,163:4–8. Cf. Van Unnik, Παρρησία, 14.

99   Van Unnik, Παρρησία, 17.

gives the following description of the use of παρρησία in Theodore's *Catechetical Homilies*:

> ... *parrhèsia* is an expression for the new life of Christians; the 'freedom of the children of God' who, by the work of Jesus Christ, are no longer separated from the Almighty, Holy and Eternal God, and who, as citizens of God's world, converse with Him as their Father. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit which is enjoyed here in the sacraments and prayer.[100]

Mingana's rendering of παρρησία with 'confidence' is rejected by Van Unnik as too associated with a subjective feeling and not in harmony with the more objective way in which the term is employed by Theodore in general.[101] That 'confidence' is indeed not the primary meaning of παρρησία in the present context, is nicely illustrated by a passage from Theodore's first homily on the Eucharist:

> ... Christ our Lord ... will take us up to heaven where He will give us His full παρρησία (ܘܗܒ ܠܢ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܦܪܗܣܝܐ ܠܘܬܗ) and prepare for us great friendship (ܪܚܡܘܬܐ) and fellowship (ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ) with the invisible hosts, the trusted messengers of God.[102]

The phrase ܘܗܒ ܠܢ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܦܪܗܣܝܐ ܠܘܬܗ may be more literally translated as: "and He will grant us to have much παρρησία with/towards Him". It is clear that παρρησία refers not in the first place to a subjective feeling here, but to an objective condition of 'freedom' and 'openness'. Following Theodore's train of thought, the subsequently mentioned 'friendship' and 'fellowship'—although pertaining to the angels—are probably the characteristics of such a free and open relationship. This bears to our understanding of παρρησία within the context of the signing, especially because the structure of the phrase is similar: "and so that we may be known to possess so much παρρησία with God (ܘܒܗܕܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܢ ܦܪܗܣܝܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܠܗܐ) that we look at Him with an open face, and display before Him the stamp by which we are seen to be members of the household and soldiers of Christ our Lord". Mingana's "so much" is not in the Syriac and is probably a result of his subjective interpretation of παρρησία as 'confidence'. But that would make the relation-

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100   Ibid., 16–17. Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 70: "In a baptismal context the word means 'freedom to speak to God,' 'confidence,' and above all the freedom to address God as 'Father'".

101   Ibid., 21.

102   XV,90:2–10 (XV,34); S XV,227:17–24.

ship dependent of (the strength of) man's inner feeling. In light of the above, it seems better, then, to render with: "and so that it may be known that we have the freedom with God to look at Him with an open face ...".

Although παρρησία basically connotes 'freedom' or 'openness' and not 'confidence', the subjective side is never far away and may be considered as a consequence of its objective meaning. So, with reference to the Eucharist, after having said that the bishop has received παρρησία to distribute the elements, Theodore continues: "He holds (the elements) with his hand, so that he may himself receive confidence (ܬܟܠܬܐ) with his own hands; and he not only is not in fear because of (their) greatness, but has much confidence (ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܬܟܠܬܐ) because of (their) grace".[103] This παρρησία–related confidence extends to the community by means of the pontiff:

> If the live coal that was carried with tongs by the Seraph took away sins when brought into contact with the lips, and did not scorch or wholly consume according to the nature of the object that was seen, how much more will it not be right for you, when you see the priest bestowing upon you this gift with his hands, and with great παρρησία, because of the grace of the Spirit conferred upon him for this service—to have also confidence (ܬܟܠ) and to receive it with great hope? You have fear because of the greatness of the gift, but when you have received it, you will put your trust on (ܬܟܠ) Him[104] who granted such things to mankind, and who bestowed also such a παρρησία upon the priest; not only upon himself alone, but upon those who are in need of the grace of God, if according to the words of the blessed Paul, he stands "to offer sacrifice for his own sins and for the people's."[105]

The objective truth of free access to God removes fear and evokes a subjective attitude of confidence in the believer.

This dynamic also becomes clear from a benefit of the sign not mentioned yet, i.e. its protection against the demons. Theodore says: "we are rightly stamped in a place that is higher than our face, so that from far we may frighten the demons, who will not then be able to come near us and injure us".[106] Just before, Theodore argues that the stamp is placed on the forehead so that the

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103   XVI,119:33–36 (XVI,38); S XVI,261:10–13.
104   Lit. "on the mercy of Him who ..." (... ܠܥܠ ܡܪܚܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܘ ܕ). *T&D*: "en la miséricorde de celui qui ..."; *BS*: "in die Barmherzigkeit dessen, der ...".
105   XVI,120:1–14 (XVI,38); S 261:14–25.
106   2,47:1–3 (2,18); S 2,178:1–4.

believer "may be seen to possess great παρρησία".[107] The demons do not dare to approach the Christian because they perceive the sign on his forehead, which shows that he has παρρησία towards God. It is a small step from this objective protective feature of the sign to a subjective attitude of confidence to be evoked in the believer.

With reference to the signing, the idea of παρρησία is underpinned by an appeal to two Pauline texts, which are combined in one passage:[108]

> Because now we are seeing (ﻧﺤﺰﻳﻦ) as in a mirror (ﺑﻤﺤﺰﻳﺘﺎ), in a riddle (ﻓﻠﺎﺗﺎ), but then face to face ... and with an open face we are seeing (ﻧﺤﺰﻳﻦ) the glory of the Lord as in a mirror (ﺑﻤﺤﺰﻳﺘﺎ) and are being trans-formed (ﻣﺴﺘﺤﻠﻔﻴﻦ) into the same image from glory to glory as from the Lord, the Spirit (ﻣﻦ ﺭﻭﺣﺎ ﻣﺮﻳﺎ ﺩﻳﻦ ﺍﻳﺘﻮﻫﻲ).[109]

The first phrase "Because ... face to face" is the first part of 1 Cor. 13:12; the remainder is a citation of 2 Cor. 3:18. The passages are linked to each other by the term 'face' (πρόσωπον).[110] In his study of παρρησία in Theodore's *Catechetical Homilies*, Van Unnik remarks about these texts:

> It is very curious that Theodore quotes in this passage after the first *parrhèsia* those texts of St. Paul which he does and not another one like Eph. 3:12 or Hebr. 4:16, for 1 Cor. 13:12 and 11 Cor. 3:18 do not seem to have any connection with it.[111]

Yet, somewhat later on the same page he remarks that "the uncovered face is an indispensable element in the train of thought" and adds that "much stress

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107   2,46:32–33 (2,18); *s* 2,177:21–22.
108   The following is my own translation in an effort to present a rendering more faithful to the Syriac than Mingana's which runs thus: "Because now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face and with an open face we shall behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," ...
109   2,46:34–37 (2,18); *s* 2,177:23–26. The Syriac quotations are taken from the Peshitta (by the translator of Theodore's homilies), which follows the Greek text closely.
110   Van Unnik, Παρρησία, 19, contends that the texts are also "linked together by ... 'mirror' (or: glass)", but this holds only for the Syriac translation where in both cases the term ﺑﻤﺤﺰﻳﺘﺎ is used. In the Greek—the original language of Theodore's homilies—this relation is much less evident as 1 Cor. 13:12 has ἐσόπτρου and 2 Cor. 3:18 κατοπτριζόμενοι. Cf. *BAGD*, 397a and 535a.
111   Van Unnik, Παρρησία, 21.

is laid on the fact that the seal is given on the forehead".[112] Although Van
Unnik himself remains hesitant concerning the function of the Pauline texts
in Theodore's train of thought, it seems to me that he has nevertheless paved
the way for a possible solution. Below I will gratefully employ Van Unnik's con-
tribution as a stepping stone for my own proposal.

The larger context of 2 Cor. 3 is pivotal. Although Paul does not use παρρησία
in 2 Cor. 3:18, he *does* employ it in verse 12 of the same chapter. In order to see
the relation between verse 18, as quoted by Theodore, and παρρησία in verse 12,
it is worthwhile to quote the whole passage here:

> [12]Since we have such a hope, πολλῇ παρρησίᾳ χρώμεθα, [13]not like Moses,
> who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at
> the outcome of what was being brought to an end. [14]But their minds were
> hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil
> remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. [15]Yes, to
> this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. [16]But when
> one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. [17]Now the Lord is the Spirit,
> and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. [18]And we all, with
> unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into
> the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from
> the Lord who is the Spirit.
>
>   2 Cor. 3:12–18

Van Unnik has convincingly shown that this passage constitutes a coherent
unit with clear connections to the preceding and following argument.[113] He
has pointed out that the key to understanding Paul's argument is the Aramaic
equivalent of παρρησία, 'to uncover the face' (גלה אפין) or 'the head' (ראש).[114]
Against this background, the otherwise blurred relation between παρρησία, 'the
veil', and 'the unveiled face' now becomes clear. In verse 12 παρρησία concerns
Paul's attitude towards the Corinthians—and not his relationship with God—
as compared to Moses hiding his face from the people.[115] But in the develop-

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112   Ibid., 21.
113   "With Unveiled Face," 168–169.
114   "Semitische achtergrond," esp. 9 ff.; "With Unveiled Face," 160 ff. The Aramaic equivalent of
       παρρησία has survived in Syriac (ܐܪܓ ܠܝܘܬܐ and variants) as is attested by the Peshitta
       (Phil. 1:20, 1 Tim. 3:13, Heb. 3:6, 10:19, 35, 1 John 2:28, 3:21, 4:17; in other cases the loanword
       ܦܪܗܣܝܐ is used (e.g. 2 Cor. 7:4) or ܓܠܝܬ ܗܡ, 'openly' (e.g. Heb. 4:16)) and the East Syr-
       ian baptismal liturgy ("Semitische achtergrond," 7–9).
115   "With Unveiled Face," 159–160.

ment of the argument, he extends the thought to all believers:[116] "... when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed."[117] Interestingly, although Moses may be the first referent of this phrase, "since there is no expressed subject it could also be applied in a more general way: this happens to any individual among them [i.e. the Jews] upon whose (αὐτῶν) hearts the veil rests, that is: to anybody who enters into the new covenant of the Spirit".[118] The uncovering of the face results in an open relationship with fellow believers, but in the first place with God: "And we all, *with unveiled face*, beholding the glory of the Lord ...". Here, the Aramaic equivalent of παρρησία, which constantly figured on the background, becomes explicit. But while Moses experienced the unveiled condition only temporarily,[119] communion with God is the enduring experience of the Christian.[120] What is more, the believer himself increases in glory by an ongoing process of transformation, a process of "realizing eschatology".[121]

In light of the above, I propose the following explanations of why Theodore may have chosen to refer to 2 Cor. 3:18 concerning the παρρησία related to the sign on the forehead. Above all, it is important to consider Theodore's train of thought and the function of the texts within it. The relevant passage consists of three parts. The first section is the sentence: "You are stamped at that place so that you may be seen to possess great παρρησία." The third part starts with "we are rightly stamped in a place that is higher than our face" and, besides the mention of the apotropaic effect against the demons, it contains the phrase: "we have the παρρησία with God to look at Him with an open face, and display before Him [that part of our body] where also the stamp is (ܐܝܟܐ ܕܐܦ ܪܘܫܡܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ)".[122] In the first and the third part Theodore mentions both παρρησία and the stamp. Yet, in the third part he adds the 'open face'. And this is where part two, the Pauline texts—and especially 2 Cor. 3:18—comes in. By means of the explicitly mentioned equivalent of παρρησία in 2 Cor. 3:18, the metaphor of an 'open' or 'unveiled face', Theodore is able to make sense of the connection between παρρησία and the sign on the forehead: one who has παρρησία with God approaches Him with an uncovered face, and so shows the stamp on his forehead. In other words, the metaphor of the 'unveiled face' in 2 Cor. 3:18 bridges the gap between παρρησία and the stamp. This also

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116   Ibid., 166–167.
117   The phrase "the veil is removed" parallels the phrase "through Christ it is taken away". See "With Unveiled Face," 163.
118   Ibid., 166.
119   Ex. 34:33–35.
120   "With Unveiled Face," 167.
121   Ibid., 168.
122   The translation is my own.

explains why Theodore did not refer to texts like Eph. 3:12 or Heb. 4:16 where παρρησία is mentioned, but not the metaphor he needed.[123] This indicates that Theodore must have been strongly aware of the parallel between παρρησία and 'to uncover the face'.[124]

Furthermore, as we have seen, 2 Cor. 3:18 portrays a process of 'realising eschatology'. This eschatological aspect is also strongly present in the other passage Theodore refers to, 1 Cor. 13:12: "Because now we are seeing as in a mirror, in a riddle, but then face to face …".[125] Linked together by the term 'face', both passages not only sustain Theodore's "idea of the sacraments as 'proleptic eschatology'"[126] in general, but also the eschatological point of reference of the signing, as established above, in particular. In this way, the Pauline texts not only have an indispensible position in Theodore's train of thought,[127] but at the same time sustain his eschatological focus.

In the Syrian tradition παρρησία is an aspect of sonship and therefore related to the Spirit by whom the filial adoption is conferred.[128] So, pertaining to the Lord's Prayer, Theodore describes in a proleptic way the new condition of the candidates to be realised by baptism:

> As to you, you have received through Me [i.e. Christ] the grace of the Holy Spirit whereby you have obtained adoption of sons and παρρησία to call God, Father. You have not received the Spirit in order to be again in servitude and fear but to be worthy of the Spirit of adoption of sons through which you call God, Father, with παρρησία.[129]

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123   Although Van Unnik does not make this explicit connection, he is very close to it. See Παρρησία, 21.

124   Van Unnik, "Semitische achtergrond," 13 points out that in both Latin and Greek expressions existed which were equivalent to the Aramaic בריש גלי 'with uncovered head'. Unfortunately, Theodore's remaining commentaries on 1 and 2 Corinthians do not seem to contain any relevant information concerning the present discussion. See Staab, *Pauluskommentare*, 191–192 and 198.

125   My own translation of the Syriac.

126   Van Unnik, Παρρησία, 19.

127   Because it is clear that the candidates are bareheaded at this point of the ritual, Van Unnik, Παρρησία, 22 contends that Theodore's emphasis on the 'uncovered face' is "more or less a 'Fremdkörper' here" and speculates that "this goes back to a practice at baptism in which the candidates had their head covered, and at this point they were uncovered". But if my analysis holds, i.e. that Theodore applies 'to uncover the face' to relate the stamp to παρρησία, it is possible that the current emphasis on the uncovering of the face is relatively recent and does not necessarily indicate an older ritual of veiling/unveiling.

128   Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 68–71.

129   XI,6:27–32 (XI,7); s XI,131:2–6.

Yet, although stressing the importance of παρρησία, Theodore is completely silent on the Spirit and sonship in his mystagogy of the signing on the forehead.[130] Such is a consequence of "changing biblical models and imagery".[131] In Theodore's mystagogy, as we will see below, the gift of the Spirit and the related sonship have been ritually connected to the font.[132] This explains why Theodore omitted any relation between the signing and gift of the Spirit.[133] It is therefore the more remarkable that he disconnected the gift of the Spirit and sonship from παρρησία,[134] which he creatively succeeded in connecting to the stamp.[135]

The subsequent spreading of the *orarium* on the candidate's head and his rising confirm the bestowal of benefits upon the candidate by all foregoing rituals, but do not add anything to it. The *orarium* symbolises the freedom of the candidate belonging to his new status.[136] Before, he was "standing bareheaded,[137] as is the habit of the exiles and the slaves".[138] But as a freeman—having been delivered from servitude and having become Christ's own—he is privileged to

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130   Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 41.

131   Ibid., *Holy Spirit*, 70.

132   Or: "have been shifted towards the font", if one follows the Winkler-Brock hypothesis (see p. 82n48 and p. 286n446).

133   Brock, "Transition," 222.

134   Does also the reference to the Holy Spirit in the text quoted by Theodore, 2 Cor. 3:18, betray an earlier connection between the signing and the Spirit?

135   The passage is also partly quoted by Cyril concerning the post-baptismal anointing of the whole body in *MC* 3.4: "First you are anointed on the forehead so as to be released from the shame which the first sinner carried around everywhere, and to reflect the glory of the Lord with face unveiled" (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 126, 128; tr. Yarnold, 177). Although the circumstances differ, it is noteworthy that in both *MC* and Theodore the passage is applied to the anointing of the forehead. Van Unnik, Παρρησία, 19 also rightly points out that the association of the kneeling posture of the candidate with the fall at this stage of Theodore's rite offers another parallel and conjectures: "It is possible, although exact proof is lacking at the moment, that Cyril and Theodore both draw upon a certain traditional explanation of the sealing of the forehead". Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 383–388 holds a similar position.

136   It is worth mentioning that the concept of freedom is also present in 2 Cor. 3:17, just preceding the verse quoted by Theodore: "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom". The antonym of 'to uncover the face or head', i.e. 'to cover the face or head' connotes 'shame', 'mourning', and 'bondage'. Therefore, the uncovering was also associated with 'freedom'. (Van Unnik, "With Unveiled Face," 165). But Theodore does not seem to be able to exploit this relation as it would contradict the image of the *orarium*.

137   Lit. 'naked' (ܕܘܪ̈ܠܝܐ), so *T&D*: "nu" and *BS*: "nackt". Although it is not a literal rendering, it seems to me that Mingana has rightly interpreted 'naked' as 'bareheaded' here.

138   2,47:26–27 (2,19); *S* 2,178:20–21.

cover his head with linen as a "mark of freedom" (ܐܬܐ ܕܚܐܪܘܬܐ).[139] The *orarium* signifies that the baptizand has "been chosen for the heavenly service and been freed from communion with earthly things, while obtaining the freedom which is in heaven".[140] Since only freemen are allowed to serve in a worldly army, "how much more", Theodore maintains, "ought the person who has been detailed for the service of heaven to be remote from servitude?".[141] The freedom, then, of which the *orarium* is a symbol, is not boundless but a liberty to serve in the heavenly army of the Most High. Concerning the concluding rising, Theodore instructs the baptizand that it shows

> that you have cast away your ancient fall, that you have no more communion with earth and earthly things, that your adoration and prayer to God have been accepted, that you have received the stamp which is the sign of your election to the ineffable military service, that you have been called to heaven, and that you ought henceforth to direct your course to its life and citizenship while spurning all earthly things.[142]

6.2   Narsai of Nisibis

6.2.1   *Description and Discussion of the Ritual*
Narsai provides the following concise description of the order of the ritual:

> He calls the King's servants by their names and causes them to stand (forth);[143] and he makes them to pass one by one, and marks their faces with the brand of the oil.[144]

The ritual is very straightforward: the candidates pass the bishop one by one and accordingly receive the sign on their foreheads. Since the baptizands were kneeling during the preceding rituals,[145] they first had to stand up. It is said that the pontiff "causes them to stand (ܡܩܝܡ)"[146] and consequently "makes them to pass (ܡܥܒܪ) one by one". In all probability this simply means that the

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139   3,49:15 (3,1); *s* 3,180:17.
140   3,49:16–18 (3,1); *s* 3,180:18–19.
141   3,49:18–21 (3,1); *s* 3,180:19–22.
142   2,47:16–23 (2,19); *s* 2,178:13–18. Cf p. 106–107.
143   See p. 197n106 for a remark on this rendering.
144   22,367:17–19; *s* :10–11.
145   See p. 197.
146   Cf. 22,363:39–40; *s* :22–23.

bishop commissions them to rise up and to pass by. But as the signing is immediately preceded by the testimony of the sponsor and the enrolment, we cannot rule out the possibility that the causative form is used because the candidates are assisted by their godparents during these acts.

In his homily *On Epiphany* Narsai mentions with reference to the anointing of Jesus by John the Baptist: "In secret, He anointed him before only the one who was administering (baptism); for thus demands the great rite of anointing".[147] This seems to suggest that the signing was normally performed in private. From the above, however, we may get the impression that the ritual had a more open character, with the candidates witnessing each other's anointing. Is the latter a pragmatic adjustment to a setting with too many candidates to offer each a private treatment? Or—since the homily *On Epiphany* is probably of a later date than the liturgical homilies[148]—does the private anointing reflect a later liturgical praxis or maybe a different physical environment?[149] Lacking conclusive information, we can only raise questions like these pertaining to these seemingly contradictory circumstances.

Like Theodore, Narsai testifies of a passive formula for the anointing and also its rationale is similar:

> The priest does not say 'I sign,' but 'is signed'; for the stamp that he sets is not his, but his Lord's. He is (but) the mediator who has been chosen by a favour to minister; and because it is not his it drives out iniquity and gives the Spirit.[150]

Although Narsai nowhere provides the exact words of the formula, it is clear that it was Trinitarian. Several times he remarks that the three names are pronounced. So he says: "… and he signs and says 'Father' and 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit.'"[151] and: "The three names he recites in order (ܒܛܟܣܐ),[152] one after the other".[153] Therefore, the formula was probably equal or similar to: "'So and so' is signed in the name the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". Yet, in one instance Narsai puts much more into the bishop's mouth:

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147   313–314; ed. and tr. McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 89. For the fuller quote, see n195 below.
148   See p. 26.
149   Jensen, *Living Water*, 1 reminds us of the truth that the physical environment constitutes the context of the text. The text itself therefore only tells us half the story.
150   22,367:30–34; *s* :17–19.
151   22,367:26–27; *s* :15.
152   Or: "in the ritual", "in the liturgy" (Payne Smith, 173b).
153   22,365:15; *s* :9. Cf. 22,366:15–19; *s* :10–12 and 22,367:36; *s* :21.

> By the voice of his utterances he proclaims the power that is hidden in his words, (and declares) whose they are, and whose name it is with which they are branded: 'Such a one,' he says, 'is the servant of the King of (all) kings that are on high and below; and with His name he is branded that he may serve (as a soldier) according to His will.' The name of the Divinity he mixes[154] in his hands with the oil; and he signs and says 'Father' and 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit.' 'Such a one,' he says, 'is signed with the three names that are equal, and there is no distinction of elder or younger between One and Another.'[155]

As we have established before, however, 'verbatims' like these are in all likelihood poetic renditions of the actual ritual.[156] In such cases Narsai probably does not provide the real wording, but a dramatised mystagogy. His interpretation of the ceremony as a branding of soldiers for service is projected back into 'reality'. The same is true for the paraphrase of the formula, which is clearly an anti-Arian statement.

Narsai explicitly refers to the consecration of the oil: "The three names he casts upon the oil, and consecrates it, that it may be sanctifying the uncleanness of men by its holiness."[157] Although it is certain that the blessing of the oil preceded the anointing, Narsai does not provide us any indication when it actually occurred.

The signing is most commonly designated by the term ܪܘܫܡܐ ('sign,' 'mark', 'token', 'signing with the sign of the cross')[158] and its related verb ܪܫܡ ('to sign', 'make the sign of the cross').[159] Also frequently employed are ܛܒܥܐ ('seal', 'sign', 'signet', 'stamp')[160] and ܛܒܥ ('to imprint a seal', 'to mark, sign, seal').[161]

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154   The image of 'mixing' something with the Holy Spirit or the oil seems characteristic of Syrian tradition (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 9–10).

155   22,367:19–29; *s* :11–17.

156   See p. 157 and p 200.

157   22,365:38–40; *s* :22–23.

158   22,364:1 (*s* :23); 22,364:5 (*s*: 3); 22,364:6 (*s* :3); 22,366:11 (*s* :6); 22,366:16 (*s* :9); 22,366:22 (*s*: 14); 22,368:10 (*s* :7); 2,368:12 (*s* :8). Cf. Payne Smith, 536a.

159   22,363:40 (*s* :23); 22,364:6 (*s* :3); 22,365:10 (*s* :6); 22,365:12 (*s* :7); 22,365:40 (*s* :24); 22,366:1 (*s* :1); 22,366:16 (*s* :9); 22,367:26 (*s* :15); 22,367:27 (*s* :15); 22,367:30 (*s*: 17) (2×). Cf. Payne Smith, 551a.

160   22,365:7 (*s* :3); 22,365:9 (*s* :5); 22,366:29 (*s* :17); 22,366:32 (*s* :19); 22,367:19 (*s* :11); 22,367:31 (*s* :18). Cf. Payne Smith, 167a.

161   22,365:8 (*s* :4); 22,366:30 (*s* :18); 22,367:19 (*s* :11); 22,367:22 (*s* :12); 22,367:24 (*s* :14). Cf. Payne Smith, 166b.

Less often used are ܚܬܡ ('to seal'),[162] ܡܫܚ ('to anoint')[163] and ܢܝܫܐ ('ensign', 'banner', 'standard', 'sign').[164] The anointing is performed with (olive) oil (ܡܫܚܐ),[165] also (once) called 'oil of anointing' (ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ)[166] and 'anointing/unction of the oil' (ܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ).[167]

From the use of ܢܝܫܐ we may assume that the anointing was performed in the form of a cross.[168]

6.2.2   *Function and Meaning of the Ritual*

After having renounced Satan, having made his promises to Christ, and having been enrolled in the Church book, the baptizand arrives at the first of the mysteries (*ʾrāzē*), the signing on the forehead. By the anointing, the candidate receives several benefits: the mark of ownership, protection against evil powers, healing and cleansing.

The ܢܝܫܐ is a mark of ownership. It resembles the branding of a sheep and the tattooing of a soldier. So, it is said:

> He makes him to stand as a sheep in the door of the sheep-fold; and he signs his body and lets him mix (ܡܚܠܛ) with the flock.[169] ...
>
> O thou dust-born, that signest the flock with the sign of its Lord, and sealest upon it His hidden Name by the outward mark![170]

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162   22,364:7 (*s* :4); 22,366:18 (*s* :11); 22,367:19 (*s* :11). Cf. Payne Smith, 163b–164a.

163   22,366:28 (*s* :16). Cf. Payne Smith, 305a–b.

164   22,367:7 (*s* :4). Cf. Payne Smith, 339a. Another possible meaning of ܢܝܫܐ is 'aim' and Narsai creatively plays on the different meanings of the term: "The arrows of words he fixes (as on a bowstring, and) sets in the midst of their mouths, that they may be aiming against the Evil One who made them slaves. A mark (ܢܝܫܐ) he sets before their eyes for them to aim at; and as (arrows) on a bow-string he draws back the words on their tongues. ... In truth the priest stands at the head of their ranks, and shews them the mark (ܢܝܫܐ) of truth that they may aim aright. They renounce the standard (ܢܝܫܐ) of the Evil One, and his power and his angels; and then he (the priest) traces the standard (ܢܝܫܐ) of the King on their forehead." (22,366:37–367:7; *s* :366:23–367:4).

165   22,364:1 (*s* :1); 22,365:11 (*s* :6); 22,365:13 (*s* :7); 22,365:29 (*s* :17); 22,365:31 (*s* :18); 22,365:38 (*s* :23); 22,366:26 (*s*: 15); 22,366:27 (*s* :16); 2,367:19 (*s* :11); 22,367:26 (*s* :15); 22,367:34 (*s* :20); 22,367:37 (*s* :21); 22,367:38 (*s* :22); 22,367:40 (*s* :23); 22,368:4 (*s* :3); 22,368:6 (*s* :4). Cf. p. 221 concerning the meaning of ܡܫܚܐ.

166   22,368:4 (*s* :3).

167   22,368:6 (*s* :4).

168   Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 313, 416; Payne Smith, 536a.

169   Cf. *AT* 156 where it is said: "and Thou didst bring them into Thy fold, and mingle (ܚܠܛ) them with Thy sheep" (ed. Wright, I, 322; tr. Wright, II, 288). This idea of the baptised being mingled with the flock seems typical for Syriac writers (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 10n17).

170   22,363:39–364:8; *s* 363:22–364:4.

And:

> He calls the King's servants by their names and causes them to stand
> (forth); and he makes them to pass one by one, and marks their faces with
> the brand of the oil. By the voice of his utterances he proclaims the power
> that is hidden in his words, (and declares) whose they are, and whose
> name it is with which they are branded: 'Such a one,' he says, 'is the servant
> of the King of (all) kings that are on high and below; and with His name
> he is branded that he may serve (as a soldier) according to His will.'[171]

Although the (older) sheep image[172] is rivalled by the image of a soldier
branded for service, the sheep image occurs more frequently[173] and, therefore,
is certainly not "put … into the background" as Brock[174] maintains. It is true,
though, that of the two, the soldier image is more developed in Narsai, but that
is caused by its connection with the notion of the neophyte's battle against evil
forces, as we will discuss shortly below.

The oil is the medium by which the branding is performed. In order to be
fit for its purpose, it first has to be consecrated. This is pictured by Narsai as
follows:

> The three names he casts upon the oil and consecrates it, that it may be
> sanctifying the uncleanness of men by its holiness.[175]

With the three names of the Trinity imprinted on it, the oil becomes a signet[176]
which the bishop employs to mark the candidates:[177]

> To them He gave the signet (ܛܒܥܐ) of the name of the incomprehensi-
> ble Divinity, that they might be stamping men with the holy Name. The

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171   22,367:17–25; *s* :10–14.

172   Cf. *AT* 26 (see further p. 256f).

173   Besides the quotations above, see for the sheep image: 22,359:2 (*s* :1); 22,359:4–8 (*s* :2–5);
       22,364:6–8 (*s* :3–4); 22,365:9–10 (*s* :5–6); 22,366:15–16 (*s* :9–10). And for the soldier image
       see: 22,361:2931 (*s* :19–21); 22,366:29–42 (*s* :17–25).

174   Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 119.

175   22,365: 38–40; *s* :22–23.

176   This idea of the oil as a signet (ring) is already found in Ephrem: "Like a signet ring which
       leaves its impression on wax, so the hidden seal of the Spirit is imprinted by oil on the bod-
       ies" (*On Virginity* 7.6; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 188–189). The difference is that in Narsai it
       is not the Holy Spirit, but the name of the Trinity which is stamped on the initiands.

177   Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 118.

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stamp of His name they lay upon His flock continually; and with the Trinity (ܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ)[178] men are signing men.[179]

The name of the Divinity he mixes in his hands with the oil; and he signs and says 'Father', and 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit'. 'Such a one,' he says, 'is signed with the three names that are equal, and there is no distinction of elder or younger between One and Another.'[180]

So, the baptizand is not only signed *by* the Trinity but even signed *with* the three names. He receives the name of the Divinity, viz. the three names, as a mark stamped on his forehead. Although such does not necessarily rule out the praxis of tracing a cross on the candidate's forehead (see above), it is noteworthy that for Narsai the mark does not symbolise the cross, but the name of the Trinity. Narsai's mystagogy is clearly antiheretical here.[181]

As already mentioned while discussing Theodore's signing, the original Syrian pattern of signing-baptism was modelled on the Jewish initiation rite for proselytes with the structure circumcision-baptism.[182] Interestingly, Narsai's poetic phraseology testifies of an awareness of this background as he pictures the signing with oil as a spiritual circumcision:

The iron of the oil the priest holds on the tip of his fingers; and he signs the body and the senses of the soul with its sharp (edge). The son of mortals whets the oil with the words of his mouth; and he makes it sharp as iron to cut off iniquity.[183]

When this and similar passages[184] are put in context, it becomes clear that the main idea conveyed by the cutting imagery is that of ownership,[185] complemented by the notion of purification.

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178   Lit. 'trice', 'triply', 'threefold' (Payne Smith, 614a).

179   22,365:7–10; *s* :3–6. Cf. 358:37–359:2; *s* 358:23–359:1.

180   22,367:25–29; *s* :14–17. Cf. 22,366:19–20; *s* :12.

181   Cf. Narsai's homily *On Epiphany* 439 ff.; ed. and tr. McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 97 ff.

182   See p. 233–234.

183   22,365:11–14; *s* :6–8.

184   See 364:8–10; s :4–5 and 365:40–42; *s* :24–25.

185   Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 119–120. Similar to the author of the third hymn on Epiphany, referred to above (p. 233–234), Narsai, in his homily *On Pentecost* (= Homily 27) puts forward the idea that the signing with the Holy Spirit replaces the circumcision of the Old Covenant: "The circumcised people that was glorified by the fleshly seal, saw that the nations were marked by the Spirit and (so) broke his seal." (ܥܡܐ ܓܙܝܪܐ ܕܒܚܬܡܐ ܕܒܣܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܬܗܕܪ: ܚܙܐ ܕܒܪܘܚܐ ܡܬܪܫܡܝܢ ܥܡܡܐ ܘܫܪܐ ܚܬܡܗ) (ed. Mingana, *Homiliae et carmina* II, p. 82:10–11; my own translation). See further Arickappallil, "Pneumatological Vision," 200.

One of Narsai's most developed ideas concerning the signing is that it equips the believers for battle against Satan and evil spirits.[186] This is where the earlier mentioned soldier image is further developed. As soldiers, the neophytes are not only the King's possession, but actively serving in the spiritual army and fighting the enemy. In this warfare, the mark on their forehead protects them like a shield (ܣܟܪܐ),[187] and the oil like an armour (ܙܝܢܐ).[188] The sign with oil is also indicated as the "great brand (ܛܒܥܐ) of the King of kings",[189] "the standard (ܢܝܫܐ) of the King".[190] Therefore, the mark is put on the forehead: "(that it may be) for the confusion of the devils; that when they discern (it) on the head of a man they may be overcome by him (or it)."[191] Accoutred as such, the neophytes serve in the King's army, headed by the priest, who, as a general, leads them into battle against the enemy.[192]

The battle with evil powers is also pictured by Narsai as a contest of athletes:

> The three names he recites, together with the oil upon the whole man; that hostile demons and vexing passions may not harm him. … As athletes they descend (and) stand in the arena, and they close in battle with the cowardly suggestions that are in them. … and they go forth confidently to wage war against the Evil One. … The sign of His name the devils see upon a man; and they recoil from him in whose name they see the Name of honour. The name of the Divinity looks out from the sign on the forehead; and the eyes of the crafty ones are ashamed to look upon it.[193]

The baptizand is compared here to an athlete who covers his whole body in oil so that his slippery skin is more difficult to grasp by his opponent. It is interesting to note that this picture—and the same is true for the image of the oil being

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186   22,366:19–367:16; *s* 366:12–367:10. See also 22,367:37–368:13; *s* 367:21–368:9. Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 122–127. Brock treats the images of the oil as protection and armour as two separate pictures. In Narsai the two are clearly interwoven as two sides of the same image.

187   22,366:20; *s* :12.

188   22,366:27; *s* :16.

189   22,366:29–30; *s* :17–18.

190   22,367:7; *s* :4.

191   22,366:22–24; *s* :13–15. Additions between parentheses are Connolly's. Cf. 22,368:9–13; *s* :7–9. In a more pictorial way, Narsai utters: "The second Sun has shone from on high on the head of man; and with His beams He drives away error, the second darkness." (22,368:14–16; *s* :9–10). The idea seems to be that the head of man reflects the light of the Divinity and so blinds and repels the enemy.

192   22,366:33–35; *s* :20–21. Cf. the Peshitta version of Eph. 6:11 ff.

193   22,367:37–368:13; *s* 367:21–368:9.

an armour—best fits a whole body anointing.[194] But Narsai, whose rite does
not include such a ritual (see above), creatively applies the idea to the anoint-
ing of the head.[195] Although the oil is not upon the whole body, it is upon "the
whole man" and by divine power "it makes firm the body and the faculties of
the soul".[196] In this way, the "oil is a symbol (ܐܬܐ) which proclaims the divine
power".[197]

Besides being a branding of God's own and a preparation for spiritual war-
fare, the anointing of the forehead is also portrayed by Narsai as a spiritual
healing or cleansing:

> The three names he [the bishop] casts upon the oil, and consecrates it,
> that it may be sanctifying the uncleanness of men by its holiness. With
> the name hidden in it he signs the visible body; and the sharp power of
> the name enters even unto the soul. Ah, marvel, which a man performs
> by that (power) which is not his own; signing the feeble bodies so that
> the inward (parts) feel the pain. The office of a physician, too, he exer-
> cises towards the members; touching the exterior and causing pain (*or*
> sensation) to reach unto the hidden parts. To body and soul he applies
> the remedies of his art; and the open and hidden (disease) he heals by
> the divine power. Divinely he mixes the drug that is given into his hands;
> and all diseases he heals by its power without fail. As a (drug-)shop he has
> opened the door of the holy temple; and he tends the sicknesses and binds
> up the diseases of his fellow-servants. With the external sign (*rushmâ*) he

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194   Brock, "Transition," 217.

195   In a similar way, Narsai applies the athlete image to the anointing of Jesus. After having
       been baptised by John, God the Father anoints Jesus: "With the Spirit, He anointed him as
       an athlete (so as) to engage in wrestling; and He made (His) voice audible to the viewers of
       the contest. The viewers heard only the declaration which the Father proclaimed; but the
       anointing under the likeness of the dove they did not observe. In secret, He anointed him
       before only the one who was administering (baptism); for thus demands the great rite of
       anointing. The priests only is it permitted to sanctify the oil, since they discern, as house-
       holders, the greatness of its power. Also John, as minister and friend of the bridegroom,
       through a revelation was deemed worthy to observe the Spirit descending. He alone saw
       the gift under the likeness of the dove ..." (*On Epiphany* 309–319; ed. and tr. McLeod, *Metri-
       cal Homilies*, 88–91). Although the comparison with an athlete evokes the idea of a whole
       body anointing, it is clear that such is not the case here. Jesus is not completely anointed
       with oil, but *with the Spirit*, symbolised by "the anointing under the likeness of the dove"
       resting on Him (on His head?). For the idea of Jesus as an athlete, see also 21,348:27 ff. Cf.
       Brock, "Greek Words," 444–446.

196   22,368:7–8; *s* :5–6.

197   22,367:41–42; *s* :23.

touches the hidden diseases that are within; and then he lays on the drug
of the Spirit with the symbol (*âthâ*) of the water.[198]

Time and again, Narsai makes clear that it is not the oil itself by which all
these benefits are bestowed on the baptismal candidate; they are merited by
God. In this regard Narsai speaks of (the power of) 'the Divinity', (the power
of) 'the (three) names', 'the name of the Divinity' and the like,[199] and, some-
what less frequently, of (the power of) 'the Spirit'.[200] Nevertheless, as it is only
the Spirit—and not the Father or the Son—who is explicitly related to the
oil, the Spirit remains the principal agent of the anointing.[201] The relation
between the Spirit and the anointing is normally presented as such that by the
power of the Spirit, meditated by the oil, the benefits of the Spirit—sometimes
explicitly referred to as "the wealth of the Spirit" (ܥܘܬܪܐ ܪܘܚܐ)[202]—are
distributed. One time, however, Narsai speaks of the conferring of the Spirit
Himself. Explaining the passive formula, Narsai mentions that the "priest does
not say 'I sign,' but 'is signed' … because it is not his it drives out iniquity *and
gives the Spirit* (ܘܝܗܒ ܪܘܚܐ)".[203] How does this 'giving of the Spirit' relate to
the distributing of 'the wealth of the Spirit'? This may be enlightened by Nar-
sai's homily *On Epiphany* in which a fuller treatment is given of the relation of
the Spirit to the anointing. Concerning the anointing of the *homo asumptus*,[204]
it is said that "the Spirit … anointed him",[205] that God anointed him "with the

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198 22,365:38–366:13; *s* 365:22–366:8. Another interesting image Narsai uses—but not explic-
      itly with reference to the anointing and may apply to initiation as a whole—is that of
      the Spirit as 'sponge': "The rust of iniquity He willed to wipe away from mortals; and His
      purpose put the sponge of the Spirit into the hand of our body" (22,357:7–9; *s* :4–6). The
      same picture, combined with healing, is found in the East Syrian *Ordo*: "Praise to you,
      who healed the sickness of our body through the oil and water which you poured on our
      wounds (cp Luke 10:34), and through your Spirit you wiped off, as though with a sponge,
      the filth (or pus) of sin from our soul, so as to make us pure temples for your honour, O
      Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 59).

199 22,365:7–10 (*s* :3–5); 22,365:30–31 (*s* :18); 22,365:38 (*s* :22–23); 22,366:6 (*s* :4); 22,366:20–21
      (*s* :12–13); 22,367:25–26 (*s* :14); 22,367:35 (*s* :20); 22,367:38–368:1 (*s* 367:22–368:1).

200 22,364:8 (*s* :5); 22,364:13–14 (*s* :8); 22,367:34 (*s* :19); 22,368:5 (*s* :3–4); 22,368:5–6 (*s* :4–5).

201 For a discussion of the Holy Spirit in Narsai's writings and in those on the mysteries in par-
      ticular, see Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*, 69–89. A more general treatment of the Spirit in Narsai
      is provided by Arickappallil, "Pneumatological Vision".

202 22,357:18–19 (*s* :11); 22,364:13–14 (*s* :8); cf. 22,365:6 (*s* :3); 22,366:15 (*s* :9).

203 22,367:30–33; *s* :17–19. Italics mine.

204 The man Jesus as distinguished from the divine Logos. Narsai agrees with Theodore's
      Christology.

205 McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, II, 298.

Spirit",[206] that "he has received the entire wealth of the Spirit (ܥܘܬܪܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ);
and He remains with him without departing according to the (regular) order
of His indwelling",[207] that he "has received the Spirit",[208] that "the Holy Spirit
has anointed the Only-Begotten and filled Him with (His) Spirit",[209] and that
he received "the gift (of the Spirit)".[210] As a consequence of His own anoint-
ing, Christ "has made the fellow members of his race share in the wealth of the
Spirit (ܥܘܬܪܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ)",[211] and "gives the Spirit (ܝܗܒ ܪܘܚܐ)".[212] Regarding
both the anointing of Christ and Him anointing man, it seems that 'receiving
the Spirit' and 'sharing in the wealth of the Spirit' are parallel expressions.[213] By
receiving the Spirit, man participates in His benefits and vice versa. So, the 'giv-
ing of the Spirit' in the passage under consideration harmonises with the more
common notion of 'distributing the benefits of the Spirit'. Yet, it is noteworthy
that Narsai emphasises the latter much more than the former concerning the
anointing. The reason for this may be that he wanted to avoid the impression
that the Spirit is only conferred by the oil and not by the water. The renewing
work of the Spirit is effectuated by the twin rituals[214] of water and oil and so the
(wealth of the) Spirit is not only conferred by the oil, but by the water too.[215]
Therefore, Narsai can say:

> With the external sign (*rushma'*) he touches the hidden diseases that are
> within; and then he lays on the drug of the Spirit with the symbol (*a'tha'*)
> of the water.[216]

And:

> Cunningly He mixed the colours for the renewal of our race, with oil and
> water and the invincible power of the Spirit.[217]

206   Ibid., 299.
207   Ibid., 303–304.
208   Ibid., 326; cf. 433, 458.
209   Ibid., 343.
210   Ibid., 435.
211   Ibid., 436.
212   Ibid., 138; cf. 147.
213   Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 56–57.
214   See also p. 63. Cf. Jones, *Womb of the Spirit*, 147–148.
215   Cf. Green, "Pre-Baptismal Seal," 85–86.
216   22,366:10–13; *s* :6–8. Additions between parentheses are Connolly's.
217   21,3419–3411; *s* :6–7.

6.3   The Rituals Contextualised

The first indisputable evidence for a baptismal anointing in the Great Church is attested by Tertullian and concerns a post-baptismal ritual.[218] It is a matter of consensus, however, that the early Syrian pattern was anointing-baptism.[219] The Syrian baptismal anointing has received considerable attention, and especially its early shape is still a matter of debate. Yet, before I touch upon this issue, I shall first discuss the anointing(s) of the relevant sources of Syria and its vicinity in order to construct the necessary contextual framework for the comparison of Theodore and Narsai. The sources—which will be discussed in roughly chronological order—are: the *Didascalia*, the *Acts of Thomas*, Aphrahat, Ephrem, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, John Chrysostom, the Jerusalem *MC*, the *Testamentum Domini*, the Syriac *Acts of John*, *AR*, and the *Barberini Euchologion*.

6.3.1   Didascalia Apostolorum

Although the *Didascalia Apostolorum* does not contain a separate treatment of initiation, the discussion of other subjects includes enough baptismal material to get a general idea of its shape.[220] A passage discussing the usefulness of deaconesses provides the following information:

> ... the office of a deaconess is required. In the first place, when women go down into the water, it is required that those who go down into the water shall be anointed (ܢܬܡܫܚ) by deaconesses with the oil of anoint-

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218   *On Baptism* 7–8 (ed. and tr. Evans, *Baptism*, 16–17). Of course, as Tertullian describes the anointing as an established ritual, the practice must have been current for a while. Yet, unambiguous testimony for a baptismal anointing in the Great Church is lacking before Tertullian's time. Justin Martyr may have known an initiation rite like Tertullian's, consisting of baptism followed by anointing, but not necessarily so (Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, 15). Some have argued for a ritual anointing as early as New Testament times, but this view seems doubtful (see Mitchell, *Baptismal Anointing*, 16–17; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 195, 198; Smalley, *1,2,3 John*, 106). An anointing connected to baptism is first witnessed by the Gnostics (Ferguson, *Baptism*, 280n13, 282; Ferguson leaves open whether the Gnostics borrowed the ritual from the Great Church or vice versa, or both inherited the practice from a common tradition).

219   Older scholarship, convinced of the apostolicity of the ritual of confirmation, saw an equivalent of that ritual in the Syrian pre-baptismal anointing. For an overview of the discussion, see Bradshaw, *Search*, 146–149; cf. Jones, *Womb of the Spirit*.

220   Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 436–440; Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*, 16–23. For a discussion of the anointings in the *Didascalia*, see especially Varghese, *Onctions*, 15–16; Winkler, "Original Meaning," 66–70.

ing (ﬠﬦﬠﬥ ﬨﬦﬦ). And where there is no woman present, and
especially no deaconess, it is necessary for him who baptizes to anoint
(ﬨﬦﬦﬥﬦ) her who is being baptized. But where there is a woman, and
especially a deaconess, it is not right that women should be seen by men,
but with the laying on of hand anoint (ﬨﬦﬦ) the head only. As of old
time the priests and kings in Israel were anointed (ﬨﬦﬦﬦﬦ), so in like
manner,[221] anoint (ﬨﬦﬦ) the head of those who receive baptism, whether
of men or women. And afterwards, whether you yourself baptize or you
command the deacons or presbyters to baptize—let a women deacon, as
we have said before, anoint (ﬨﬦﬦﬦ) the women. But let a man recite over
them the invocation of the divine names in the water. And when she who
is being baptized has come up from the water, let the deaconess receive
her, and teach and educate her in order that the unbreakable seal of bap-
tism (ﬨﬦﬦﬦﬦﬦ ﬨﬦﬦ) shall be (kept) in chastity and holiness.[222]

We are informed here that the pattern of initiation is anointing-baptism; no
post-baptismal ritual is mentioned. The anointing is performed by a laying-on
of hand in likeness of the anointing of priests and kings in the Old Testament.
The account is silent on a formula for the anointing.[223]

The difficulty with this passage, however, is that it regulates a specific situ-
ation, i.e. the baptism of women. For reasons of modesty, it is preferred that
the bodies of women be anointed by other women and not by men. In that
case, the presiding man only anoints the head, while a deaconess anoints the
body.[224] The crucial question—but hard to answer—is whether this differen-

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221   The phrase 'with the laying-on of hand' (ﬨﬦﬦ ﬨﬦﬦﬦ) is not translated here.
222   *DA* 16; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 407, 173; Vol. 408, 156–157.
223   In chapter 9 it is said that the bishop, "… through whom you became sons of the light,
      and through whom the Lord in baptism, by the laying on of the hand of the bishop, bore
      witness to each one of you and caused his holy voice to be heard that said: 'Thou art my
      son: this day have I begotten thee'" (ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 109; Vol. 402, 104). Winkler,
      "Original Meaning," 71 seems to assert that the latter quotation of Psalm 2:7 (also attested
      as a variant reading of Luke 3:22 in the Western text) was said during the anointing and
      thus functioned as a formula. A little further in the same passage, however, it is said that
      the bishops are "those who by the water have begotten you anew", which seems to indicate
      that Psalm 2:7 was uttered within the context of the immersion instead of the anointing
      (see p. 330).
224   Spinks, "Another Reading," 51 suggests that, when no woman or deaconess was present,
      only the head of women were anointed. I doubt, however, that this is the right interpre-
      tation of the text. Pivotal here is the following passage: "And where there is no woman
      present, and especially no deaconess, it is necessary for him who baptizes to anoint her
      who is being baptized. But where there is a woman, and especially a deaconess, it is not

tiation between an anointing of the head and the body reflects the common pattern or whether it is gender related. In other words, did one consider the anointing of the head and the body as two distinctive acts, or as a single one, performed by the pouring of oil upon the head and consequently rubbing it over the entire body?[225] In case of the latter, the anointing of the head in likeness of priests and kings would initiate one single anointing, including the body. In case of the former, the reference to priests and kings would pertain only to the anointing of the head, leaving the anointing of the body without any mystagogical interpretation, possibly indicating its secondary nature.[226]

The Holy Spirit is conferred by 'baptism',[227] i.e. initiation as a whole, and mediated by the bishop.[228] From that time on, the believer is "filled with the Holy Spirit" if he remains on the path of virtue.[229] But if someone sins, the Spirit departs. The penitent's communion of the Holy Spirit is restored by a laying-on of hands by the bishop, which takes the place of baptism.[230]

The verb used for the anointing is always ܡܫܚ and the oil is called 'oil of anointing' (ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ). The 'seal of baptism' (ܚܬܡܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ), but also just 'seal' (ܚܬܡܐ),[231] and 'baptism' (ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ)[232] refer to initiation as a whole and not to some ritual in particular.

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right that women should be seen by men, but with the laying on of hand anoint the head only". Two situations are contrasted here: when a woman or deaconess is present and when one is not. In the second case, the bishop anoints "the head only", as it would be wrong for him to see a woman if not strictly necessary, i.e. when a woman is present to do the job. But in the first instance, when no woman or deaconess is present, "it is necessary" for the bishop "to anoint". As the bishop always anoints the head, this 'necessary anointing' can only refer to the anointing of the whole body and so contrasts the other situation when he is allowed to anoint "the head only".

225 The latter is proposed by Meyers, "Structure," 41. For a discussion of her position, see p. 282 f.

226 See the discussion at the end of this section.

227 *DA* 10; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 120 lines 19–21; Vol. 402, 114 lines 14–16 and *DA* 16; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 407, 255 lines 16–17; Vol. 408, 238 lines 13–14 and Vol. 407, 257 line 19 ff.; Vol. 408, 240 line 13 ff.

228 *DA* 9; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 109 lines 21–22; Vol. 402, 104 line 20.

229 *DA* 10; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 407, 255 lines 16 ff.; Vol. 408, 238 lines 13 ff. and Vol. 407, 257 line 19 ff.; Vol. 408, 240 line 13 ff.

230 *DA* 10; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 120 lines 12–21; Vol. 402, 114 lines 8–16.

231 *DA* 10; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 119 line 13; Vol. 402, 113 line 11.

232 *DA* 10; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 120 lines 19–20; Vol. 402, 114 lines 14–15.

6.3.2   Acts of Thomas

The *Acts of Thomas* survives in a Greek and a Syriac version,[233] both of which contain five accounts of baptism, viz. in chapters 26–27, 49, 120–121, 131–133, and 156–158. The anointings in the *Acts of Thomas* play an important role in the current debate concerning the early Syrian praxis, which I will discuss at the end of this section. What matters most here, however, is not so much the quest for original practice, but the testimony of the text as it stands in order to contextualise the rituals of Theodore of Narsai. Therefore, we will discuss the different initiation accounts in the *Acts* in chronological order and mention the relevant differences between the Syriac and the Greek versions.

Chapters 26–27[234] describe the baptism of king Gundaphorus and his brother Gad. They beg the apostle to give them the 'sign'/'seal' (ܪܘܫܡܐ/σφραγίς) by which God recognises his sheep. At night, the apostle anoints them and prays the epiclesis. Next, according to the Syriac—after the bath had been closed for seven days—the king and his brother enter the bath-house on the eight day[235] and are baptised in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Greek version, however, does not *speak* of 'baptism' (or 'water') but of 'sealing'[236] and concludes the epiclesis with: "And seal (ἐπισφράγισον) them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost".[237] Both versions record that after baptism/sealing a young man appears with a burning candle. Initiation is followed by the Eucharist, which is celebrated at dawn.

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233   Attridge, "Original Language" has convincingly shown that the AT were originally composed in Syriac.

234   Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 192–193; tr. Wright, II, 166–167. Greek: ed. Bonnet, 141–143; tr. Elliott, 457–458. For a commentary, see Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 75–84.

235   Spinks, "Another Reading," 48 suggests that baptism on the eighth day parallels circumcision. Although this is an interesting thought, one must note that from early times on the number eight had a mystical meaning and symbolised the beginning of the new era (cf. 1 Pet. 3:20–21; *Barn.* 15.8–9; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 138.1–3). "The eighth day was that of the Resurrection, the Lord's day, of the future aeon and of eternal life. Eight became the symbol of all that was permanent, abiding, and eternal and also of the life which blossomed in the font" (Van der Meer & Mohrmann, *Early Christian World*, 129). In the West, the octagonal shape became preferred for both baptisteries and fonts from the fifth century onwards (Jensen, *Living Water*, 255, 244; cf. Van der Meer & Mohrmann, *Early Christian World*, 128–131). Cf. Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 204–209.

236   Twice the Greek version reads "sealed" instead of "baptised".

237   In the Syriac version this phrase follows the epiclesis and reads: "And he baptised them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit of holiness."

According to the Syriac version, the oil is poured on the heads of the candidates.[238] But in the Greek version, two steps are mentioned. It is said that first the apostle "sealed them", after which they heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Peace be with you, brethren!". But they did not see Him "for they had not yet received *the further sealing of the seal* (τὸ ἐπισφράγισμα τῆς σφραγῖδος)".[239] Subsequently the apostle poured oil upon their heads,[240] and "anointed and chrismed them (ἀλείψας καὶ χρίσας αὐτοὺς)".[241] The exact nature of the 'sealing' and the 'further sealing of the seal' is not entirely clear and different proposals have been offered. Some assert that the first sealing concerns baptism in water and the second one an anointing.[242] Others maintain that both refer to an anointing.[243] As it is explicitly said that the apostle "ordered them to bring oil, that *through the oil* (διὰ τοῦ ἐλαίου) they might receive the seal",[244] it seems to me that the first sealing is a ritual involving oil.

In both the Syriac and Greek versions the 'sign'/'seal' seems to refer to the whole rite of initiation (except for the Eucharist).[245] (As already noted, the Greek version explicitly connects the seal with the oil.) The epicleses, which concern the initiands (not the oil), start with an address to "the holy name of the Messiah" and conclude with an address to "the Holy Spirit". The latter is asked to purify the initiands. The terms employed for the 'pouring' and the 'oil' are respectively ܐܶܫܽܘܕ[246]/καταχέω and ܡܶܫܚܳܐ/ἔλαιον.

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238 It is a matter of debate whether such a pouring suggests only an anointing of the head or also includes a whole body anointing. See the discussion at the end of the present section.

239 Italics mine. The Syriac also mentions that they heard only the voice, but this time because they "had not been baptized".

240 See n238.

241 So Elliott. Spinks, "What is 'new'," 25 renders "smeared it, anointed them" and suggests that this "implies more than pouring oil on the head".

242 Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 345 conjectures that a later editor "took σφραγίζειν to be a technical term for the seal of baptism in water" and added 'the further sealing of the seal' and χρίσας as a reference to the post-baptismal chrismation. In like manner, Varghese, *Onctions*, 6n19 contends that σφραγίς and derivatives in chapters 26–27 are associated with both baptism and anointing and proposes that the first sealing concerns baptism in water. Sandnes, "Seal and Baptism," 1472–1473 also includes baptism with water.

243 Klijn, "Baptism," 59 interprets both the 'sealing' and the 'further sealing of the seal' as an anointing, but sees this as a later development and considers the Syriac version to be the original here. In his more recent *Acts of Thomas*, 78, however, Klijn conjectures that the first sealing "might be baptism with water". Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 114 suggests that the first sealing may have been a crossing on the forehead (with oil).

244 Italics mine.

245 Cf. Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 112; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 430.

246 Afel of ܫܘܕ.

Chapter 49[247] offers a brief report of the initiation of a woman. After the apostle has laid his hand(s)[248] on a group of people and blessed them, one of them, a woman, asks for the 'sign'/'seal' (ܪܘܫܡܐ/σφραγίς), "that the enemy may not again come back upon me".[249] The Greek version recounts that the apostle "laid his hands on her (ἐπιθεὶς ἐπ' αὐτῇ τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ)" and "sealed (ἐσφράγισεν) her in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost". Afterwards, the Eucharist is celebrated. It is quite clear that the 'sealing' refers to the entire rite, since it comprises the whole rite of initiation; no other acts are mentioned. But what kind of ritual is meant here? Some propose that the 'sealing' concerns baptism with water.[250] Others surmise that the 'sealing' is an anointing.[251] The Syriac version, however, reports that the woman is baptised in water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. No laying-on of hands is mentioned here. So, in the Greek version the 'seal' refers to a ritual—either baptism or an anointing—accompanied by a laying-on of hands, while in the Syriac version it clearly concerns baptism. Nevertheless, in both versions the 'sign'/'seal' refers to the entire rite of initiation and is seen as protective. Since the Eucharist is distributed to those who "had received the seal" (Greek) or "were baptized" (Syriac), the Eucharist is clearly not seen as part of the seal.[252]

Chapters 120–121[253] report the baptism of a woman called Mygdonia. The general pattern in the Syriac and Greek is similar. After having asked for the 'sign'/'seal' (ܪܘܫܡܐ/σφραγίς) of Jesus Christ, assisted by her nurse Narkia, Mygdonia is anointed and baptised (with a Trinitarian formula) by the apostle. Afterwards, she receives the Eucharist. Since it is mentioned only after the Eucharist that she has received the 'sign'/'seal', the Eucharist seems to be con-

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247   Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 217–218; tr. Wright, II, 188–189. Greek: Bonnet, 165–166; tr. Elliott, 467. For a commentary, see Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 123–124.

248   The Syriac has the singular as is the custom in Syriac liturgical usage. See Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 124.

249   Wright, II, 188–189. The Syriac and Greek are similar here.

250   So Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 124 and Varghese, *Onctions*, 7n23.

251   So Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 114 and Ferguson, *Baptism*, 432.

252   Here I disagree with Sandnes, "Seal and Baptism," 1473, who contends, somewhat confusingly, that "[t]he seal gives admission to the communal meal, which becomes part of the seal itself". It seems that Sandnes imports the idea of the Eucharist being part of the seal from Mygdonia's baptism (chapters 120–121, see below). As, however, the different accounts of initiation in the *AT* are far from uniform, one must be careful not to harmonise one narrative with another too hastily.

253   Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 290–291; tr. Wright, II, 257–259. Greek: Bonnet, 229–231; tr. Elliott, 493–494. For a commentary, see Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 204–207.

sidered as part of the initiation process here.[254] The Syriac and Greek versions describe the performance of the anointing in a different way, however. The Greek account mentions only the pouring of oil on the head, while the Syriac records two anointings (or two stages of the one anointing), one of the head and another of the whole body. For reasons of modesty, it is not the apostle but the nurse who anoints the body of Mygdonia. The terms used for the 'pouring', the 'oil' and the 'anointing' (of the body) are respectively ܐܬܝܢܣ/καταχέω, ܡܫܚܐ/ἔλαιον, and ܡܫܚ.

In both versions the anointing of the head is accompanied by an epiclesis. In the Greek version, the epiclesis is on the baptizand Mygdonia,[255] and completely addressed to the oil. In the Syriac version, however, the epiclesis is on the oil,[256] and addressed to both the oil and the Messiah. Interestingly, both epicleses contain the phrase: "Holy oil, given to us for sanctification; hidden mystery, in which the cross (σταυρός) was shown to us".[257] Such may indicate that the anointing of the head was combined with a sign of the cross.[258] After having poured the oil on Mygdonia's head, the apostle utters (in the Syriac version only): "Heal her of her old wounds, and wash away from her her sores, and strengthen her weakness". In both versions the oil has healing and cleansing power.[259]

In Chapters 131–133[260] the baptism of Siphor and his family is narrated. They first ask for the seal in order to "become servants of the true God and be counted among his sheep and lambs". After having asked for the 'sign'/'seal' (ܪܘܫܡܐ/σφραγίς), the apostle pours oil on their heads and baptises them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Next, the Eucharist is celebrated. The 'sign'/'seal' seems to refer to the whole rite of initiation. Both versions report a short epiclesis spoken during the pouring of the oil in which

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254   Cf. Sandnes, "Seal and Baptism," 1468.

255   "Let your power come and rest on your servant Mygdonia, and heal her by this liberty" …

256   "… let Thy power come and abide upon this oil, and let Thy holiness dwell in it".

257   Greek: Bonnet, 230; tr. Elliott, 494. The Syriac is similar.

258   Cf. Sandnes, "Seal and Baptism," 1467.

259   The healing aspect of initiation as a whole and the anointing in particular is also present in chapters 156–157, where Jesus is portrayed as a physician of body and soul (Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 323–324; tr. Wright, II, 289–290. Greek: ed. Bonnet, 266–269; tr. Elliott, 504–505). The feature seems somewhat more prominent in the Syriac than in the Greek. Interestingly, DA 10 pictures the unconverted as 'sick' (ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 120; Vol. 407, 114). It is worth noting that chapters 121 (Syriac only) and 157, as well as the *Didascalia* include a full body anointing. Possibly, the regular anointing of the body in case of sickness is reflected in the ritual here.

260   Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 301; tr. Wright, II, 267. Greek: ed. Bonnet, 238–240; tr. Elliott, 497. For a commentary, see Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 213–216.

the name of the Messiah and the power of the Messiah are addressed. The terms used for the oil are ܡܫܚܐ and ἔλαιον. Remission of sins and the restoration of man is achieved by the whole rite of initiation. But no specific meaning of the anointing is mentioned.

Chapters 157–158[261] describe the initiation of a certain Vazan and some women. First, the apostle prays for the candidates and concludes his prayer with the appeal to let the Holy Spirit dwell in them. Then, he orders Mygdonia to undress the women. Next, after having prayed the epiclesis, the apostle pours oil upon their heads. A full body anointing follows; the apostle anoints Vazan, while Mygdonia anoints the women. After the anointing, the initiands are baptised in water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Finally, the Eucharist is celebrated. Earlier in the story, Vazan had requested that the apostle grant him the 'sign'/'seal' (ܪܘܫܡܐ/σφραγίς).[262] This is the only occurrence of the term in this account and it seems again that the term pertains to the whole rite of initiation. The first part of the epiclesis—which concerns the oil—is directed to the olive (tree).[263] In the remainder, (the power of) Jesus is requested to abide upon the oil. The use of ξύλον, as referring to both the olive tree and the cross, may indicate an anointing with the signing of the cross.[264] The epiclesis is mainly concerned with the apotropaic effect of the oil. During the pouring of the oil, the apostle prays that Jesus the Messiah let it be for the remission of sins, for protection against evil (Greek) or destruction (Syriac), and for salvation (Greek) or healing (Syriac) of their souls (Syriac: and bodies). The terms employed for the 'oil', the 'pouring', and the 'anointing' (of the body) are respectively ܡܫܚܐ/ἔλαιον, ܐܫܝܕ/ἀποχέω, and ܡܫܚ/ἀλείφω.

261   Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 323–324; tr. Wright, II, 289–290. Greek: ed. Bonnet, 266–269; tr. Elliott, 504–505. For a commentary, see Klijn, *Acts of Thomas*, 240–243.

262   Chapter 150. Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 317; tr. Wright, II, 283. Greek: Bonnet, 259; tr. Elliott, 502.

263   A symbol of Christ. This idea of Christ as the true Olive (the Tree of Life), the source of the mysteries, is also found in Ephrem and the Jerusalem *MC*. For a discussion of the image in these sources, see Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 115–116, 126–127, 320–324.

264   Here, the idea of Christ as the true Olive, the Tree of Life, is extended to the cross: "Fruit, more beautiful than the other fruits, with which no other can be compared; most compassionate; you who burn with the power of the word; power of the wood (ξύλου), which if men put on they overcome their enemies, you who crown the victors ... Jesus, let your victorious power come and rest upon this oil as it once rested upon the wood (ξύλῳ) related to it—and your crucifiers could not endure its word ..." (ed. Bonnet, 222–267; tr. Elliott, 504–505). The Syriac has only the second occurrence (ed. Wright, I, 323; tr. Wright, II, 289), but the term ܩܝܣܐ likewise may refer to both the olive tree and the cross (Payne Smith, 504b). Cf. Sandnes, "Seal and Baptism," 1467.

In order to understand more fully the nature of the anointings in the *Acts*, it is worth having a closer look at the epicleses. These prayers are usually addressed to the (name of the) Messiah (the Lord, Jesus), sometimes (also) to the oil. Rather frequently, the (name of the) Messiah is paralleled with the term 'power'. In chapter 27[265] 'the holy name of the Messiah'—paralleled with 'power', but also other terms like 'gift' and 'mother' and 'Holy Spirit'—is asked 'to come' and in chapter 157[266] (Syriac) 'the Lord' and His 'gift' are invoked to come and to abide upon the oil. In chapters 121[267] and 157[268] (Greek), the Messiah is beseeched 'to let his power come'. Brock notes that "[i]n the New Testament 'Power' and 'Spirit' are sometimes more or less synonyms" and points to chapter 27 where, as already mentioned, the Holy Spirit is addressed.[269] This would imply that it is in fact the Holy Spirit who is invoked or asked for in the epicleses.[270] Although this may certainly be true on the level of theological reflection, we must note that the term 'Holy Spirit' is usually not employed.[271] Instead of presenting the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity, the 'Holy Spirit' is portrayed as the power of the Messiah, which is even paralleled with the Messiah himself. In this way, the epiclesis emphasises the messianic character of the anointing.[272] As a little 'christ', the candidate is initiated into the messianic kingdom.

Based on the above, we may draw the following conclusions concerning the anointings in the *Acts of Thomas*. a) The 'sign' (ܪܘܫܡܐ) or 'seal' (σφραγίς) refers to the whole rite of initiation[273]—usually not including the Eucharist—

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265   Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 193; tr. Wright, II, 166–167. Greek: ed. Bonnet, 142–143; tr. Elliott, 458.

266   Ed. Wright, I, 323; tr. Wright, II, 289.

267   Ed. Bonnet, 230–231; tr. Elliott, 494.

268   Ed. Bonnet, 266–267; tr. Elliott, 504–505.

269   *Holy Spirit*, 89.

270   Cf. Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 146–152; Winkler, "Original Meaning," 71 ff. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 85, 89 notes that the petition 'may your spirit come' in the epiclesis is more archaic than the other variant, 'send your Spirit'. The former is found in the Maronite and East Syriac tradition, while the latter is attested by most West Syrian rites.

271   Such is only the case, as already mentioned, in the epiclesis of chapter 27 where the Spirit is invoked to come, and in the prayer preceding initiation in chapter 157 where the apostle beseeches the Lord to let the Spirit dwell in the candidates.

272   By too hastily equating 'the power of the Messiah' and parallel terms with 'the Holy Spirit' (and without justification), Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*, 33–34, completely overlooks this aspect.

273   Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 12–14; Van Vossel, "Sceau", 246; Sandnes, "Seal and Baptism," 1473–1474. Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 115 concludes: "The seal, then, appears most commonly in the *Acts of Thomas* in requests for initiation, and could be understood to refer to the entire rite. But when it is associated with any particular aspect of initiation, it is always

which commonly has the pattern of anointing-baptism (no post-baptismal anointing), but which may also consist of a laying-on of hands (relating to anointing or baptism),[274] baptism only,[275] and maybe just an anointing;[276] b) the terms used for the 'pouring', the 'oil' and the 'anointing' (of the body) are respectively ܐܪܕܝ/καταχέω, ܡܫܚܐ/ἔλαιον, and ܡܫܚ/ἀλείφω; c) in most cases the anointing consists only of a pouring of oil on the head of the candidate; d) in the Syriac version of chapters 120–121 and in chapters 157–158 the pouring on the head is followed by an anointing of the whole body; e) the epiclesis is on the candidates in chapters 26–27 and 120–121 (Greek), but on the oil in chapters 120–121 (Syriac) and 157–158; f) the anointing receives much more attention than baptism and we may deduce from this that the anointing part comprises the heart of the rite;[277] g) the anointing provides mainly purification, healing,

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linked with the anointing. Never is the term applied to baptism. ... It appears that the term originally referred to the initiatory rite as a whole (apart from the Eucharist), but the initiatory element of the rite was precisely that of anointing. With more elaborate ritual practises, the term retained its identification with initiation per se, even when such initiations included elements beyond simply the anointing". Although I generally agree with Myers, her contention that when the seal is connected "with any particular aspect of initiation, it is always linked with the anointing" needs some qualification. Pivotal for her argument is the absence of water baptism in the Greek version of chapters 26–27 and 49. Indeed, we read in chapter 27 that the seal is received "through the oil" and the sealing of chapter 49 consists only of a laying-on of hands, possibly with oil. Yet, it is important to note that in the Syriac version of chapter 49 'the seal' equals 'baptism' as there is no anointing mentioned. Furthermore, as part of her argument, Myers maintains that "[e]ven in the initiations in chapters 121, 132–133, and 157–158, in which water baptism is clearly included as part of the rite, the seal continues to apply to the ritual involving oil" (p. 113). It is true that the anointing receives the most weight in these accounts and so we could say that the seal mainly concerns the anointing, but such does not exclude the seal being applied to baptism also. And it is worth noting that in chapter 132 (in both Greek and Syriac), after Siphor's request for the seal, the apostle begins to speak of baptism and continues with an epiclesis which clearly concerns baptism, not the anointing. Together, this instruction and prayer constitutes the main part of the account, and we could easily argue from this that in chapter 132 'the seal' primarily refers to baptism. Therefore, Myers statement that the seal or sign is "*always* linked with the anointing" when it is connected with any specific facet of the rite, is clearly an overstatement.

274   Chapter 49 of the Greek version.

275   Chapter 49 of the Syriac version.

276   As possibly witnessed by the Greek version of chapters 26–27 and 49 (see above).

277   Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 14–15; Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 115–125. Winkler, *Armenische Initiationsrituale*, 143, contends "daß *rusʿmā* hier indirekt andeutet wie sehr in syrischen Kreisen unter Taufe eigentlich die Salbung verstanden wurde. Mit anderen Worten: die Immersion ist rituel der präbaptismalen Salbung untergeordnet ...". Her conclusion is right, but

cleansing, protection, and ownership;[278] h) through the anointing the candidates become participants of the messianic reality.

6.3.3   *Aphrahat*

In his only extant writing, the *Demonstrations*, Aphrahat, 'the Persian sage', nowhere discusses the rite of baptism as such, but he comes closest in the following passage from his twelfth demonstration (12.13), *On Passover*:

> But for us, this is required, to observe the feast in its time from season to season, fasting in purity, praying constantly, praising in diligence, saying psalms as is becoming, giving the sign (with the cross) and the baptism according to its law[279] (ܘܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܢܡܘܣܗ ܘܪܘܫܡܐ); the holy blessings in their time, and all customary things may be completed.[280]

Baptism is discussed within the context of Passover and Duncan concludes that in the church of Aphrahat it was "solemnly administered on the evening of the 14th Nisan, and was followed immediately by the celebration of the Eucharist".[281]

The phrase ܪܘܫܡܐ ܠܡܬܠ has been interpreted in different ways. Some have proposed a confirmation, others a handing over of the creed (*traditio symboli*), again others an anointing (with or without a signing of the cross).[282] Although any proposal remains conjectural, the latter seems the most promising and is defended by Duncan[283] and Varghese.[284] The difficulty, however, is

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it does not seem justified to say that 'baptism' in fact was understood as 'anointing', since the whole rite is never indicated as 'baptism', but always as 'seal' or 'sign'.

278   Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 13–14. Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 111–112; Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 114–115, 122, 127.

279   Or: "according to its rite". See Payne Smith, 110b.

280   *Dem.* 12.13; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 537; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 31–32.

281   Duncan, "Demonstrations of Aphraates," 18. But see Jones, *Womb of the Spirit*, 99 who questions Duncan's interpretation and suggests that baptism was administered on the sixteenth.

282   Varghese, *Onctions*, 37; Jones, *Womb of the Spirit*, 99–100.

283   Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 108–115.

284   Varghese, *Onctions*, 37–39. Because Aphrahat nowhere mentions it, Varghese is not convinced that the sign was given in the form of a cross. Given Aphrahat's general reticence on the rite of initiation, however, such an *argumentum e silentio* does not seem very persuasive and much depends on the shared frame of reference of author and audience. If the term ܪܘܫܡܐ was generally understood as implying a crossing on the forehead during Aphrahat's time of writing (cf. Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 416, 418, 420), an

the absence of oil in our passage. Yet, in the twenty-third demonstration (23.3), *On the Cluster of Grapes*, it is said:

> But at the opening of the door, at the greeting of peace, the darkness of mind of many fled, and at the dawn of the light of understanding, and at the fruitfulness of the lightgiving olive, wherein (ܕܒܗ) is the (baptismal) mark of the mystery of salvation (ܪܘܫܡܐ ܕܐܪܙܐ ܕܦܘܪܩܢܐ), wherein (ܕܒܗ) the anointed (Christians), priests, kings and prophets are perfected (ܡܬܓܡܪܝܢ) (by the imposition of hands).[285]

The idea brought forward here, viz. that "the mark (ܪܘܫܡܐ) of the mystery of salvation" is *in* "the lightgiving olive"[286]—a symbol of Christ[287]—suggests a relation between ܪܘܫܡܐ and oil.[288] The connection with ܐܪܙܐ, which may have the meaning of a liturgical mystery, sustains the idea of a baptismal anointing. It is worth noting, furthermore, that Christians are *perfected* (ܡܬܓܡܪܝܢ) in or by (ܕܒܗ) "lightgiving olive". As the Ethpeel of ܓܡܪ may refer to the consecration of a bishop, involving an imposition of hands[289] or to an initiation (with ܡܝܐ),[290] it is possible that the verb has also such a liturgical connotation here.[291] The comparison of the perfecting of Christians with that of "priests and kings and prophets" further strengthens the case. The perfecting of priests and kings and prophets of Israel, combined with the olive tree most certainly alludes to an anointing of the head. This is confirmed by the *Didascalia* which, as we have seen above, mentions that the baptizands are anointed in the same way as the priests and kings under the Old Covenant.

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explication or further discussion may not necessarily be expected, especially when liturgical issues do not have the writer's main interest.

285   *Dem.* 23.3; ed. Parisot, Nau & Kmosko, *PS I.2*, 9; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 258–259.

286   ܕܒܗ refers to the masculine singular 'olive tree' (ܙܝܬܐ). 'Fruitfulness' (ܦܐܪܘܗܝ) is also masculine, yet plural.

287   See n263.

288   Cf. Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 110–111; Varghese, *Onctions*, 38–39.

289   Payne Smith, 72b.

290   Sokoloff, 243a.

291   In the third hymn on Epiphany, attributed to Ephrem, it is said: "The type has passed and the truth is come; lo! with *oil* have ye been *signed*, in baptism ye are perfected (ܡܬܓܡܪܝܢ), in the flock ye are intermixed, from the Body ye are nourished" (3.16 (17); ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 150; tr. *ANF* II/13, 270; words in italics are my own adaptations to bring the translation in closer harmony with the Syriac).

A final passage[292] we have to consider is also found in the demonstration *On the Cluster of Grapes*:

> O man who swears by his head and acts deceitfully, if the three great and glorious names are true to you, (the names) which were commemorated [or 'recited', NW][293] over your head (ܪܫܡܬ ܥܠ ܪܫܟ)—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—when you received the rushma of your salvation (ܪܘܫܡܐ ܕܚܝܝܟ); if baptism (ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) is true to you, do not act deceitfully with your head ...[294]

'Baptism' could be a synonym of ܪܘܫܡܐ here, but since the two are clearly distinguished in 12.13, quoted above, the same may be true here, especially because "the mark of your salvation" (ܪܘܫܡܐ ܕܚܝܝܟ) is similar to "the mark of the mystery of salvation" (ܪܘܫܡܐ ܕܐܪܙܐ ܕܚܝܐ) of 23.3, which most likely refers to an anointing.[295] Yet, although the first referent of ܪܘܫܡܐ may be the anointing, it may still be used here as a *pars pro toto* for the rite as a whole.[296] In that case, the Trinitarian formula would not necessarily apply to the anointing (only), but could also refer to the baptismal formula.

292   Another passage Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 112 sees as supporting a baptismal anointing reads: "Jacob called that place Bethel (Gen. 28:19), and Jacob erected there a pillar of stone for a testimony, and he poured oil in its top [= ܪܝ, which may also mean 'head']. Our father Jacob too did this before in symbol, that the stones would receive anointing. For the people who believed in the anointed (Messiah) will be anointed as John said about them, 'God can raise up children from Abraham from these stones' (Luke 3:8). For the mystery of the calling of the Nations is manifested before through the prayer of God" (*Dem.* 4.5; ed. Parisot, *PS 1.1*, 145; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations 1*, 80). It is true that this passage relates the anointing of the stones to that of Christians. Yet, a particular group of Christians is referred to: the Nations. This is further confirmed when Aphrahat somewhat later remarks that Jacob "anointed the stones (Gen. 28:18), a type of the Nations" (*Dem.* 4.6; ed. ed. Parisot, *PS 1.1*, 148; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations 1*, 80). So, it seems that the anointing in the first place indicates salvation as a whole here (Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 40–41) and, although it fits a ritual anointing, the passage itself does not provide any evidence of its existence.

293   Payne Smith, 92a.

294   *Dem.* 23.63; ed. Parisot, Nau & Kmosko, *PS 1.2*, 134; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations 11*, 305.

295   Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 39.

296   Cf. Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 115.

To sum up, the sparse evidence seems to indicate that Aphrahat's rite of initiation consisted of a pre-baptismal anointing,[297] at least of the head,[298] followed by baptism (and Eucharist[299]). There is no evidence of a post-baptismal ritual.

Like the *Acts of Thomas* and the *Didascalia*, Aphrahat sees the anointing as Messianic. It is likened to that of kings, priests, and prophets.[300] Yet, the Holy Spirit is never explicitly connected to the oil, but to the water.[301] Nevertheless, since the Christian anointing is likened to that of kings, priests, and prophets, and Aphrahat explicitly mentions that Saul and David received the Holy Spirit by anointing,[302] Varghese[303] wonders whether, by inference, the

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297 Jones, *Womb of the Spirit*, 99–102 is sceptical concerning any attempt to defend the presence of a baptismal anointing in Aphrahat's rite. He dismisses Duncan's and Varghese's arguments—and would probably do the same with mine—without, however, going into the discussion itself to indicate why the arguments would fall short. He merely points out that in the *AT*, ܪܘܫܡܐ cannot be simply identified with a pre-baptismal anointing, suggesting that the same holds for Aphrahat. But, of course, that remains to be seen and as Jones does not make any attempt to investigate the meaning of ܪܘܫܡܐ in Aphrahat himself, his stance remains very unsatisfactory. But even if we took the meaning of ܪܘܫܡܐ in the *AT* as a starting point here, we must note that the ܪܘܫܡܐ in the *AT* (almost) always includes an anointing (see above). Surprisingly, the latter is also admitted by Jones, leading one to wonder why he is so critical of the presence of an anointing in the initiation rite of the Persian Sage.

298 Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 119–123 asserts that Aphrahat's anointing included the head and the whole body. Although possible, this conclusion is not (and cannot be) based upon Aphrahat, but is reached by reference to other sources, viz. the *Didascalia*, the *Acts of Thomas*, Ephrem, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Narsai, and the *Syriac Acts of John*. However, the evidence for Ephrem is obscure, as we will see, and Narsai probably only knew a signing on the forehead (Duncan follows Connolly's addition "the rubbing of", wrongly suggesting an anointing of the whole body; see the discussion on p. 90 f). Furthermore, since Theodore—who is West Syrian—and the *Acts of John* postdate Aphrahat—and customs may change—these sources do not necessarily bear on our understanding of Aphrahat's rite. This leaves only the *Didascalia* and the contemporary *Acts of Thomas*. Yet, as we will discuss below, the testimony of the latter is diverse.

299 *Dem.* 4.19 (ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 181; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 94); *Dem.* 12.9 (ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 528; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 28). Cf. Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 116–123.

300 *Dem.* 23.3 (quoted above). Besides in the *Acts of Thomas*, the *Didascalia*, and Aphrahat, the idea is also current in the blessing of the oil in the Latin version of the *Apostolic Tradition* (5.2; tr. Bradshaw, Johnson & Philips, *Apostolic Tradition*, 50). Furthermore, Tertullian (*On Baptism* 7; ed. and tr. Evans, *Baptism*, 17) likens the post-baptismal anointing to Moses's anointing of Aaron, and in the Jerusalem *MC* (see n393) the same anointing is related to the concepts of priesthood and kingship (cf. Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 63–64).

301 See p. 331n219 and p. 334–335.

302 *Dem.* 6.16; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 154–155.

303 Varghese, *Onctions*, 41–42.

baptismal anointing was also accompanied by a conferring of the Spirit. This is an interesting thought, but, for lack of any clear testimony, no more than that.

6.3.4 *Ephrem*

Similar to Aphrahat, Ephrem nowhere offers a detailed description of the rite. Nevertheless, based upon his allusions to it,[304] we may infer rather safely that his rite of initiation—usually performed at or around Easter[305]—consisted of a pre-baptismal anointing, followed by baptism (no post-baptismal ritual).[306] The anointing may have been accompanied by the invocation of the Trinity.[307] It is not completely clear whether the anointing consisted of an anointing of the head or of the whole body.[308] Anyhow, the anointing constitutes a promi-

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304   Especially in his four hymns *On Virginity* 4–7, of which hymn 7 is particularly important concerning the pre-baptismal anointing. For this reason I will mainly refer to that specific hymn in the following discussion. For a detailed discussion of this hymn, see Beck, *Taufe*, 86–100.

305   "October gives rest to the weary after the dust and dirt of the summer, its rain washes, its dew anoints the trees and their fruit. April gives rest to the fasters, it anoints, baptizes and clothes in white; it scours off the dirt of sin from our souls. October presses out the oil for us, April multiplies mercies for us; in October fruit is gathered, in April sins are forgiven." (*On Virginity*, 7.2; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 184–185). Cf. Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*, 53. According to Beck, *Taufe*, 93–94, however, the phrase "O womb that gives birth every day ..." (ܐܘ ܥܘܒܐ ܕܝܠܕ ܟܠ ܝܘܡ) in the same hymn (*On Virginity* 7.7; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191) suggests that baptism was not restricted to Easter.

306   "It is the priesthood which ministers to this womb as it gives birth; anointing precedes it, the Holy Spirit hovers over its streams ..." (*On Virginity*, 7.8; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191). Cf. *On Virginity* 7.2 (see n305), 7.5, and 7.9–10. Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 46–47; Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 163–164; Beck, *Taufe*, 163–167, 183 (cf. his "Baptême," 127); Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*, 52–53; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 506–507.

307   "The [anointing] oil has three names, the trumpets of baptism" (*Virg.* 4.14; ed. Beck, *Virginitate*, 16; tr. McVey, *Hymns*, 279). Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*, 54, 68 asserts that both anointing and baptism were accompanied with a Trinitarian formula, based upon *On Virginity* 7.5: "... accompanied by the three glorious names, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 188–189). However, although the relevant stanza emphasises the close relation between anointing and baptism (see below), the direct context of the phrase concerns baptism: "... on them baptism, that is in travail with them in its womb, depicts the new portrait, to replace the image of the former Adam who had become corrupted; it gives birth to them with triple pangs, accompanied by the three glorious names, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (*On Virginity* 7.5; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 188–189). It seems more likely, therefore, that the Trinitarian formula pertains to the water here.

308   A few times, Ephrem connects the oil with 'the body' (ܦܓܪܐ): "With the oil of discernment bodies are anointed for forgiveness, bodies (ܦܓܪܐ) that were filled with stains are made white without effort" (*On Virginity* 7.7; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191) and "Oil, the beneficial fountain, accompanies the body (ܦܓܪܐ), that fount of ills" (*On Virginity* 7.9; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 192–193) and again "the baptized, like divers, strip and put on

nent part of Ephrem's rite.[309] The oil is a rich treasury of symbols.[310] Above all, it symbolises Christ.[311] Special importance is given here to the similarity between 'Christ' (ܡܫܝܚܐ) and 'oil' (ܡܫܚܐ).[312] By the anointing, the Christian participates in Christ's own anointing at the Jordan.[313] But the oil may also signify John the Baptist.[314]

Yet, despite the importance attributed to the anointing, the ritual does not outweigh the water bath as in the earlier Syrian tradition. For Ephrem, initiation consists of the equally important and closely associated twin rituals of anointing and baptism.[315] Regeneration, healing and cleansing, and forgiveness of sins are all effected by oil *and* water.[316] The oil is assigned exorcistic power, but both the anointing and baptism have an apotropaic effect; by both

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oil" (*On Faith* 82.10; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 154–255). According to Varghese, *Onctions*, 47 these are allusions to a full body anointing. This is possible. Yet, because anointing and baptism are so closely related in Ephrem (see below), we may also consider the possibility that he speaks of the (benefits of the) oil here in light of the whole rite. In that case, he would conflate the oil with the immersion of *the whole body*, meaning that the reference to the body does not say anything about the actual performance of the anointing itself. However, the third hymn on Epiphany is more explicit and says that the stone upon which Jacob poured oil is "a type of your bodies, with oil they are anointed (as) holy" (ܛܘܦܣܐ ܕܦܓܪ̈ܝܟܘܢ ܕܒܡܫܚܐ ܢܬܡܫܚܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ) (ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 148). If this hymn faithfully reflects Ephrem's praxis, it would have consisted of a full body anointing. Beck, *Taufe*, 89–91, 183 speculates that Ephrem's rite was similar to that of Theodore of Mopsuestia and consisted of both a signing on the forehead and a full body anointing.

309 Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 47.

310 Ibid., 47.

311 "... and as the beauty of Christ is manifold, so too the olive's symbols are manifold. Christ has many facets, and the oil acts as a mirror to them all: from whatever angle I look at the oil, Christ looks out at me from it!" (*On Virginity* 7.14; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 196–197).

312 As in: "In both name and deed does the oil (ܡܫܚܐ) depict Christ (ܡܫܝܚܐ)" (*On Virginity* 7.12; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 194–195). And: "... the baptized, like divers, strip and put on oil, as a symbol of Christ." (*On Faith* 82.10; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 254–255).

313 Varghese, *Onctions*, 54.

314 Ibid., 49. In that case the anointing is seen, like John the Baptist, as a forerunner, who prepares the arrival and presence of Christ in the baptised.

315 Varghese, *Onctions*, 49–50; Beck, *Taufe*, 84–100 and "Baptême," 127; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 512–513; cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 47, 130.

316 E.g.: "A royal portrait is painted with visible colors, and with oil that all can see is the hidden portrait of our hidden King portrayed on those who have been signed: on them baptism, that is in travail with them in its womb, depicts the new portrait, to replace the image of the former Adam who had become corrupted; it gives birth to them with triple pangs, accompanied by the three glorious names, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit." (*On Virginity* 7.5; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 188–189). Varghese, *Onctions*, 49–53; Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 109–111; 143–144; Beck, "Baptême," 127.

oil and water the baptizand receives an 'armour' against evil powers.[317] It is by
the power of the Spirit that all these benefits are realised.[318] So, concerning the
oil, Ephrem says:

> The oil (ܡܫܚܐ) is the dear friend of the Holy Spirit, it is Her minister,
> following Her like a disciple.
>   With it the Spirit signed (ܪܫܡܬ) priests and anointed kings
> (ܡܫܝ̈ܚܐ);[319] for with the oil the Holy Spirit imprints (ܚܬܡ) Her mark
> (ܪܘܫܡܗ) on Her sheep.
>   Like a signet ring which leaves its impression (ܚܬܡ ܠܓܘܫܡܐ) on wax,
> so the hidden seal (ܚܬܡܐ) of the Spirit is imprinted (ܡܬܚܠܬ) by oil
> on the bodies of those who are anointed (ܡܬܡܫܚܝܢ) in baptism; thus
> they are signed (ܪܫܝܡܝܢ) in the baptismal [mystery].[320]

This passage makes clear that the ܪܘܫܡܐ is a mark of ownership.[321] Like sheep
which are stamped by their owner, the initiands receive the mark of the Holy
Spirit—mediated by the oil—on their bodies.[322] Interestingly, Ephrem alludes
to the signing of priests and kings (in the Old Testament) in a similar way as the
Didascalia and Aphrahat. This again points to the messianic character of the
anointing we already came across by the play on the words 'Christ' (ܡܫܝܚܐ)
and 'oil' (ܡܫܚܐ).

An intriguing image Ephrem uses is that of the pearl diver. Like pearl divers,
the baptizands smear their bodies with oil and plunge into the water to search
for Christ, the Pearl.[323] In this, the initiands mimic Christ, who Himself also

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317   Varghese, *Onctions*, 51; Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 110.
318   Varghese, *Onctions*, 53–55; Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 160–169; Chalassery, *Holy Spirit*,
       64.
319   Lit. 'messiahs', or 'anointed ones' (so McVey, *Hymns*, 294). Brock is probably right that the
       'anointed kings' of the Old Testament are referred to. Yet, the translation as it stands is
       somewhat confusing, and Winkler, "Original Meaning," 68 clearly misunderstood Brock's
       rendering and even wrongly adapted it to "With it the Spirit signs priests and anoints
       kings". The rendering of McVey leaves no room for misunderstanding: "As a disciple it
       accompanies her, since by it She seals priests and anointed ones".
320   *On Virginity* 7.6 (ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 188–189).
321   According to Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 61–68 ܪܘܫܡܐ primarily refers to initiation as a
       whole in Ephrem (Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 57n88). Frequently, however, Ephrem applies the
       term for a fundamental part of the rite on which the properties of the whole are reflected
       (p. 68). Such is the case with the anointing. Reversely, initiation in its entirety is also called
       'anointing' (p. 165). Cf. the third hymn on Epiphany.
322   Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 53–54.
323   E.g.: "… the baptized, like divers, strip and put on oil …" (*On Faith* 82.10; ed. and tr. Brock

entered the water of baptism like a pearl diver "and raised up from the water the treasure of salvation for the race of Adam."[324]

Ephrem sees Old Testament prefigurations of the anointing in the olive leaf brought to Noah's ark by the dove (Gen. 8:11), the oil poured on the stone by Jacob (Gen. 28:18), the anointing of Aaron by Moses (Lev. 8:12), the anointings of Saul (1 Sam. 10:1) and David (1 Sam. 16:13), and the anointing of lepers as part of their purification (Lev. 14:1–20).[325]

A final remark on terminology. As a poet, Ephrem employs a palette of different words to designate initiation as a whole and the anointing in particular: 'to sign' (ܪܫܡ), 'to seal' (ܚܬܡ), 'to imprint' (ܛܒܥ), 'to anoint' (ܡܫܚ), and the related nouns 'sign' (ܪܘܫܡܐ), 'seal' (ܚܬܡܐ), 'print' (ܛܒܥܐ), and 'anointing' (ܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ).[326]

6.3.5 Apostolic Constitutions

Aside from some scattered references, the *Apostolic Constitutions* contains three fuller descriptions of the anointing-part of initiation, viz. chapter III,16:2–17:4,[327] VII,22:1–3,[328] and VII,42:1–3.[329] The latter—which mainly consists of an epiclesis on the oil—reveals that the anointing directly follows the *syntaxis*. The most informative account concerning the performance of the ritual is the first, which mentions three pre-baptismal anointings (and one following the water bath[330]). First, the baptizand's forehead is anointed by a deacon, possibly by making the sign of the cross.[331] Next, a deaconess anoints the whole

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& Kiraz, 254–255). And: "The divers too raise up from the sea the pearl; dive down (in baptism) and take up from the water the purity that is hidden there—the pearl that is entwined in the crown of divinity" (*On Epiphany* 7.18; tr. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 126).

324   *On Virginity* 7.10 (ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 192–193).

325   Varghese, *Onctions*, 55–56.

326   Varghese, *Onctions*, 56–57. All these terms, except for ܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ, are used in the above quote from *On Virginity* 7.6.

327   Ed. Metzger, II, 156, 158; tr. Grisbrooke, 75, 64. The passage is dependent on *DA* 16.

328   Ed. Metzger, III, 46, 48 lines 10–11; tr. Grisbrooke, 66. The passage is dependent on the *Didache*.

329   Ed. Metzger, III, 100; tr. Grisbrooke, 68.

330   The *Apostolic Constitutions* is one of the earliest Syrian witnesses of a post-baptismal anointing.

331   The term σφραγίς is used in III,16:4 (Metzger, II, 158 line 27); III,17:1 (Metzger, II, 158 line 3), and VII,22:2–3 (Metzger, III, 48 line 12). The term may refer to different rituals and sometimes the meaning is ambiguous or fuzzy (cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 572). In VII,22:2–3, (where also the verb σφραγίζω is used), the term is applied to the post-baptismal anointing with Myron (μύρον). The baptismal rite as a whole seems referred to in III,16:4. In III,17:1, σφραγίς is connected to the cross, but where the term exactly refers to, remains unclear from this passage. However, if we put this passage side by side with II,32:3, we may get a clue.

body, "for there is no need for the women to be seen by men". The pre-baptismal anointings are concluded by a laying-on of hands with oil by the bishop. It is important to realise that—similar to the parallel passage in the *Didascalia*—the passage mainly concerns the usefulness of female deacons in the initiation of women. This is the reason why the anointing of the body is performed by a deaconess. One may wonder, as Day rightly remarks, "whether this double anointing is only applied to women out of concern for modesty, or whether men were also anointed first on the head and then the body".[332] For the first and last anointing, the verb χρίω (and derivatives) is employed, while ἀλείφω is used for the anointing of the body. The second and third accounts are much briefer and just mention the presence of a pre-baptismal anointing, without specifying its particular nature.[333]

In all cases 'olive oil' (ἔλαιον) is used for the pre-baptismal anointings, and is more specifically dubbed 'holy oil' (ἁγίῳ ἐλαίῳ) in the first two.[334] Elsewhere

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The larger context of III,17:1 runs thus: "Baptism, then, is given in the death of the Son, the water [is] in place of the entombment, the oil [is] in place of the holy Spirit, the seal [is] in place of the cross, and the chrism confirms the confession" (ed. Metzger, II, 158 lines 1–4; tr. Grisbrooke, 64). II,32:3 says: "For by him the Lord has given you the Holy Spirit in the laying-on of hands ... through him you have been sealed with the oil of gladness, and with the chrism of understanding ..." (ed. Metzger, I, 252 lines 14–18; tr. Grisbrooke, 63). Since both the laying-on of hands of II,32 and the oil of III,17 are connected to the Holy Spirit, these phrases seem to refer to the third anointing of the first account, i.e. the laying-on of hands by the bishop (Ferguson, *Baptism*, 572 suggests that the imposition of hands in II,32:3 may refer to the pre- or post-baptismal anointing. As, however, the *Constitutions* never connects the post-baptismal Myron with the conferring of the Spirit, the pre-baptismal ritual seems to be the more likely candidate.) Both passages also refer to the post-baptismal anointing with chrism. Is it possible that the remaining phrases, "sealed with the oil of gladness" and "the seal [is] in place of the cross" also concern the same ritual (and are not synonyms of the other anointings)? In that case, these phrases—and also σφραγίς—could pertain to the anointing of the forehead, possibly in the form of a cross. This suggestion would be strengthened when the anointing of the forehead and the anointing of the body are in fact two stages of the same ritual, meaning that both passages mention all three anointings.

332   Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 69. Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 567n7 and our discussion of the *Didascalia* above.

333   The term employed for the anointing here is χρίω (and its derivatives), the same term used for the anointing of the forehead and the laying-on of hands in the first account. If, therefore, it is justified to attribute some value to the terms employed, we could conjecture that the ritual of the second and the third accounts consisted of either an anointing of the forehead or a laying-on of hands (with oil). (Varghese, *Onctions*, 107 reasons in a similar say concerning the post-baptismal anointing.) On the other hand, it is also possible that χρίω is employed here as a *pars pro toto* indicating an anointing part consisting of multiple anointings similar to that of the first account.

334   III,16:2, 4; VII,22:2; VII,42:1. Metzger, II, 156 line 11, 22; III, 48 line 9; 100, line 2.

is spoken of the "oil of gladness" (ἐλαίῳ ἀγαλλιάσεως),[335] a term also found in John Chrysostom, the Jerusalem *MC*, and the *Barberini Euchologion*.[336] Both χρῖσμα[337] and χρῖσις[338] occur only once.

With an appeal to 1 Pet. 2:9–10—and in harmony with other sources discussed so far—the laying-on of hands by the bishop in III,16:3 is likened to the anointing of the Old Testament kings and priests. In this way, as "anointed ones in the following of the anointed one" (ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ χριστιανοί), the initiands share in the messianic reality of Christ.[339] Furthermore, the anointing is "a type of the baptism of the Spirit"[340] and "the oil [is] in place of the Holy Spirit"[341] This idea is also current in the second account, which says that "the anointing may be the partaking of the Holy Spirit".[342] The epiclesis of the third account, however, puts the emphasis differently as the anointing is "for the remission of sins and as a preparation for baptism".[343] God, the Father of Jesus Christ, is petitioned to "sanctify the oil in the name of the Lord Jesus, and impart to it the grace of the Spirit and efficacious strength, the remission of sins and the predisposition for the baptismal confession, so that he who is anointed, being freed from all ungodliness, may become worthy of initiation according to the command of the Only-begotten Son".[344]

6.3.6 *John Chrysostom*

His rite contains two pre-baptismal anointings, but no post-baptismal one.[345] The first succeeds the adherence to Christ and consists of a signing of the

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335 *AC* VII,32:3; ed. Metzger, I, 252 lines 17–18; tr. Grisbrooke, 63.

336 See below.

337 *AC* VII,22:2. Metzger, III, 48 line 10.

338 *AC* VII,42:1. Metzger, III, 100 line 2.

339 Ed. Metzger, II, 156 line 17; tr. Grisbrooke, 64.

340 *AC* III,16:4; ed. Metzger, II, 156 line 22; tr. Grisbrooke, 64.

341 *AC* III,17:1; ed. Metzger, II, 158 lines 2–3; tr. Grisbrooke, 64. A similar statement is found in II,32:3, where it is said: "For by him [the bishop] the Lord has given you the Holy Spirit in the laying-on of hands" (ed. Metzger, I, 252 lines 17–18; tr. Grisbrooke, 63).

342 *AC* VII,22:2; ed. Metzger, III, 48 lines 10–11; tr. Grisbrooke, 66.

343 *AC* VII,42:2; ed. Metzger, III, 100 lines 3–4; tr. Grisbrooke, 68. Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 111.

344 *AC* VII,42:3; ed. Metzger, III, 100 lines 6–11; tr. Grisbrooke, 68. I agree with Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 70 that the epiclesis does not warrant the assumption that the anointing was exorcistic.

345 *Stav.* 2.22–24, *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350, 352 (= 3/2,22–24), 246 (= 2/3,7); tr. Harkins, 51–52, 169. For a discussion of the anointings in Chrysostom, see especially Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 119–146; Varghese, *Onctions*, 81–91; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 104–142; Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 70–72; Harkins, "Pre-Baptismal Rites," 234–238; Green, "Pre-Baptismal Seal".

cross with oil.[346] The second, a full body anointing, immediately precedes baptism.[347] It is likely that the candidates were still barefooted, attired in their undergarment, and in the same kneeling posture (with or without their hands raised) as during the preceding rituals.[348] The signing on the forehead is ministered by the bishop,[349] while the anointing of the body is probably performed by others.[350] The formula accompanying the first anointing is Trinitarian and passive: "So-and-so is anointed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Χρίεται ὁ δεῖνα εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος).[351] Although Chrysostom does not record a formula concerning the second anointing, Finn conjectures its existence.[352] The terms used by Chrysostom to designate the oil are[353] 'the Myron of the Spirit' (τῷ μύρῳ τῷ πνευματικῷ),[354] 'the olive oil of the Spirit' (τῷ ἐλαίῳ ... τῷ πνευματικῷ),[355] 'the oil of gladness' (ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως),[356] and 'chrism' (χρῖσμα).[357] Chrysostom describes the chrism as "a mixture of olive oil and unguent". Concerning the signing on the forehead, Chrysostom employs the verbs ἀλείφω (to anoint),[358]

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346 *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 (= 2/3,7); tr. Harkins, 169.

347 It is a matter of debate whether the first anointing took place on Good Friday afternoon or, together with the full body anointing, during the Easter Vigil. So Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 119–122 defends the former, while Varghese, *Onctions*, 81–82n4 opts for the latter. Furthermore, the two records in *Stav.* 2.22–24 and *PK* 3.27 conflict concerning the moment of disrobing. In *Stav.* this is put between the two anointings, but in *PK* after the second anointing, directly before baptism. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 122 (cf. 147–149) maintains that "the conflict is only apparent, because Chrysostom transposes the stripping in the baptismal action in order to develop his theme that baptism is a return to Paradise".

348 Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 122; and see p. 207 above.

349 Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 125–126.

350 As the expression "he causes your whole body to be anointed" (τὸ σῶμα ἀλείφεσθαι παρασκευάζει) suggests (*Stav.* 2.24; ed. Kaczynski, II, 352 (= 3/2,24); tr. Harkins, 52). Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 126–127 conjectures that the second anointing was performed by priests. Others propose deacons and, in case of women, deaconesses (Wenger, *Huit Catéchèses*, 92–93; Harkins, 225n53; cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 72).

351 *Stav.* 2.22; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 (= 3/2,22); tr. Harkins, 51. Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 128–130. The passive character of the formula emphasises, Chrysostom instructs his audience, "that you may again know that it is now a man but God Himself who anoints you by the hand of the priest" (*PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 (= 2/3,7); tr. Harkins, 169).

352 *Liturgy of Baptism*, 127–128. Chrysostom's formula for the sealing is identical with Theodore's formula for the anointing of the body.

353 Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 84 and Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 130–133.

354 *Stav.* 2.22; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 lines 16–17.

355 *Stav.* 2.24; ed. Kaczynski, II, 352 lines 7–8.

356 *Stav.* 3.9; ed. Kaczynski, I, 262 line 14.

357 *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 lines 11, 17, 18.

358 *Stav.* 2.22–23; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 lines 16 and 26. *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 line 23.

χρίω (to anoint, smear),[359] σφραγίζω (to seal),[360] and ἐντυπόω (to impress, imprint),[361] and the related nouns σφραγίς (seal),[362] ἀλοιφή (anointing).[363] The terms employed for the anointing of the body are ἀλείφω,[364] ἀλοιφή,[365] and ἄλειμμα (unguent, oil).[366]

The sealing of the forehead confirms and consummates the change of allegiance realised by the preceding adherence to Christ.[367] Therefore, the seal is basically a mark of ownership, although its protective aspect is the most dominant. The sign of the cross protects the believer against the assaults of the Devil, who is furious about the candidate's change of allegiance.[368] In this way, the signing is also preparatory; it equips the neophyte—who is likened to a soldier (στρατιώτης)[369] or athlete (ἀθλητής)[370]—for future confrontations

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359 *Stav.* 2.22; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 line 18. *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 line 20.

360 *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 line 7.

361 *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 line 12.

362 *Stav.* 2.22–23; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 lines 17 and 26.

363 *Stav.* 2.23; ed. Kaczynski, II, 352 line 2.

364 *Stav.* 2.24; ed. Kaczynski, II, 352 line 7. *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 line 23.

365 *Stav.* 2.24; ed. Kaczynski, II, 352 line 9.

366 *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 line 23.

367 "After these words, after the renunciation of the devil and the covenant with Christ, inasmuch as you have henceforth become His very own and have nothing in common with that evil one, He straightway bids you to be marked and places on your forehead the sign of the cross" (*PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 (= 2/3,7); tr. Harkins, 169). Cf. *Stav.* 2.22; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 (= 3/2,22); tr. Harkins, 51. Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 113–114; Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 71.

368 *Stav.* 2.23; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 (= 3/2,23); tr. Harkins, 52. See also *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 (= 2/3,7); tr. Harkins, 169.

369 *Stav.* 2.22; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 line 15.

370 *Stav.* 2.23; ed. Kaczynski, II, 352 line 1. Brock, "Early History," 37 considers the athlete image "a very unsuitable one for this first anointing", since athletes "were anointed all over" (cf. Meyers, "Structure," 42). In my opinion, however, this is an overstatement. The background of Brock's remark concerns a presumed development of the anointing from a single head-body anointing into two separated rituals. The athlete image, which originally and more naturally covered the anointing of the whole body is retained, but connected to the signing on the head now. Yet, although the anointings are indeed separated in Chrysostom's rite, and the emphasis is on the first one, the two are still closely connected (unlike Theodore's rite wherein the two are separated by the *orarium*). This is especially true in the record of *PK* 3.27, where the anointings are not separated by the stripping as in *Stav.* 2.24. But even in the latter case it is clear that the anointing of the body completes a process which has been initiated by the sealing. That is to say, the athlete image may still cover the full body anointing as well, and there seems nothing odd about introducing the image at the beginning of the process. At the same time, it is true that the image is more tightly connected with the signing on the forehead. However, this does not necessarily imply that the application of the image is 'unsuitable'. One must note that images develop and we

with Satan in the spiritual arena.[371] The anointing of the body, which is discussed only briefly, completes the baptizand's armour.[372] So, both anointings are apotropaic, rather than exorcistic.[373]

In the Papadopoulos-Kerameus series, Chrysostom explains that "[t]he chrism is a mixture of olive oil and unguent; the unguent is for the bride, the oil is for the athlete".[374] Although Chrysostom does not develop the bride image here, he discusses it extensively elsewhere.[375]

Chrysostom does not associate the anointings with (the gift of) the Holy Spirit, who is conferred at baptism.[376] Nevertheless, the terms 'the Myron of the Spirit' (τῷ μύρῳ τῷ πνευματικῷ)[377] and 'the olive oil of the Spirit' (τῷ ἐλαίῳ ... τῷ πνευματικῷ),[378] may betray that the oil was consecrated "by a prayer in which the Spirit was invoked".[379]

6.3.7 *Jerusalem*

The Jerusalem *MC* contains two anointings, one preceding and one succeeding the bath.[380] The pre-baptismal anointing follows the *apotaxis/synta-*

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may witness such an evolution here. The more natural relation between the anointing of athletes and the ritual is loosened, while the idea of preparation for battle is retained and centred in the signing on the forehead now, a *pars pro toto* for the anointing of the whole body. As we have seen above (p. 249), Narsai's ritual witnesses a similar application of the athlete image.

371 *Stav*. 2.23; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 (= 3/2,23); tr. Harkins, 52.

372 "... he causes your whole body to be anointed with that olive oil of the spirit, so that all your limbs may be fortified and unconquered by the darts which the adversary aims at you" (*Stav*. 2.24; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 (= 3/2,24); tr. Harkins, 52). Cf. *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 (= 2/3,7); tr. Harkins, 169.

373 As is rightly remarked by Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 71–72 and Varghese, *Onctions*, 86. Green, "Pre-Baptismal Seal," 90 considered the signing "as basically a final act of exorcism", but this does not seem to do justice to the difference between delivering someone from the power of the Devil (exorcism) and the equipping of the already delivered person for future attacks, which is essentially apotropaic.

374 *PK* 3.27; ed. Kaczynski, I, 246 (= 2/3,7); tr. Harkins, 169. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 137 remarks concerning this passage that "the bridal and athletic symbolism is connected with the composition of the chrism rather than with either anointing". But that seems too neat a distinction between the meaning of the oil and the anointing.

375 See p. 346.

376 See p. 347–348.

377 *Stav*. 2.22; ed. Kaczynski, II, 350 lines 16–17.

378 *Stav*. 2.24; ed. Kaczynski, II, 352 lines 7–8.

379 Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 71; cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 132–133.

380 The pre-baptismal anointing is described in *MC* 2.2–3 (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 112, 114; tr. Yarnold, 173–174). *MC* 3 is completely dedicated to the post-baptismal chrismation (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 122–132; tr. Yarnold, 176–178). Cyril's earlier written *Baptismal Catechesis*

xis[381] and occurs "in the inner room" (ἐν τῷ ἐσωτέρῳ ... οἴκῳ),[382] probably the inner room of the baptistery where also the baptismal font was located.[383] After having stripped completely naked, the candidates are anointed all over their body with 'exorcised oil' (ἐλαίῳ ... ἐπορκιστῷ).[384] The stripping symbolises the putting off of the old man.[385] By their nakedness the candidates imitate "Christ naked on the cross, who in his nakedness 'disarmed the principalities and powers' and boldly 'triumphed over them' on the tree of the cross"[386] as well as "the first man Adam, who was 'naked' in Paradise 'but not ashamed'".[387] By the anointing—for which the term ἀλείφω is used—the initiands "became sharers in Jesus Christ, the true olive". They were "cut off from the wild olive tree and grafted on to the true olive, and began to share in the richness of the genuine olive".[388] As a result, as a "symbol of this share in the richness of Christ", the oil burns "away the traces of sin" and repels "the hidden powers of the evil one".[389] So, in harmony with his overall theology of baptism, the author interprets the

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do not contain an explicit discussion of an anointing ritual, although it seems likely that his initiation rite included at least one. For the discussion, see Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 130–137; Varghese, *Onctions*, 69–72; Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 66.

381   According to Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 68, this positioning of an exorcistic anointing "interrupts the logical sequence of an otherwise carefully explained rite" and "hints at a revision of the pre-immersion rituals in Jerusalem". She maintains that it would make more sense for such an anointing to be located directly after the renunciation and that is indeed the locus of the exorcistic anointing in the *Testamentum Domini* (see below).

382   MC 2.1; ed. Röwekamp, MC, 112 line 5; tr. Yarnold, 173.

383   See the floor plan of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Röwekamp, MC, 22.

384   MC 3.3; ed. Röwekamp, MC, 112 line 25; tr. Yarnold, 173. Probably common olive oil that has been exorcised. This is the first time in the Orient when the term 'exorcised oil' is used for the oil of the pre-baptismal anointing (Varghese, *Onctions*, 73–74).

385   Cf. Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:22–24. For a discussion of the stripping and nakedness in Cyril, see Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 162–165, 173–178, 181.

386   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 173 contends that this association, which seems peculiar to Cyril, was stimulated by the physical context, near to the location where Christ was (supposed to be) crucified.

387   Such suggests that the candidates were really stark naked, which is further underlined by the remark that "[y]ou were naked in the eyes of all and felt no shame" (MC 3.2; ed. Röwekamp, MC, 112 line; tr. Yarnold, 173).

388   This theme, which is borrowed from Rom. 11, is very uncommon in early Syrian sources, but attested in the Syrian Orthodox Ordo and later Syrian Orthodox commentators. According to Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 74–75, 121 this is due to the influence of the Jerusalem catechetical tradition.

389   Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 68 rightly observes that the oil is portrayed as an exorcist: "For just as the breathing of the saints and the invocation of God burns like the fiercest flame and chases away the demons, so too the invocation of God, together with prayer gives this exorcised oil such power that it can burn away the traces of sin and even repel the hidden powers of the evil one" (MC 3.3; ed. Röwekamp, MC, 114; tr. Yarnold, 174).

anointing as a participation in Christ; the exorcistic/apotropaic effect is secondary.[390] Because of this apotropaic effect, Doval suggests that the anointing may have involved a signing on the forehead.[391] If so, it is the more remarkable that such a signing on the forehead is not mentioned or even alluded to. Likewise, it is notable that σφραγίς or derivatives are never employed with reference to the pre-baptismal anointing.[392] Furthermore, the character of the ritual is not messianic; the Holy Spirit is not conferred by this anointing, but by the post-baptismal chrismation.[393] Although the author does not describe a consecration of the oil, such is alluded to by his remark that the oil receives power by "the invocation of God together with prayer" (ἐπικλήσει Θεοῦ καὶ εὐχῇ).[394]

6.3.8 Testamentum Domini

This Church Order mentions three anointings,[395] one preceding and two following immersion, and is dependent on the *Apostolic Tradition* here. Two kinds of oil are distinguished: 'exorcised oil' and 'oil of thanksgiving'.[396] The former is used for the pre-baptismal anointing, the latter for the anointing after baptism. Administering the pre-baptismal anointing, which is positioned between the *apotaxis* and *syntaxis*, the bishop says: "I anoint (ܡܫܚ) [with] this oil of exorcism (ܡܫܚܐ ܗܢܐ ܡܫܘܚܬܐ) for deliverance from every evil and unclean

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390 Varghese, *Onctions*, 74; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 198.

391 Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 137.

392 The term σφραγίς is employed once concerning the post-baptismal anointing, yet, not in *MC* 3, but only in passing in a discussion of the Eucharist in *MC* 4.7 (cf. Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 137–143; Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 66). In Cyril's *Baptismal Catecheses*, wherein σφραγίς occurs frequently, the term often generically denotes the whole rite of initiation, but ultimately refers to the immersion (Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 135–136). It is interesting to note that in these *Catecheses* σφραγίς is also connected to the idea of ownership. In a similar way as found in Theodore, Chrysostom, and Narsai, the sealing is portrayed as a branding of sheep or soldiers (Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 133).

393 This chrismation (χρῖσμα) is an anointing with Myron (μύρον), "the oil of gladness" (ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως), of the forehead, the ears, the nostrils, and the breast—which mimics Christ's anointing with the Spirit after baptism, and through which the baptizand shares in Christ's messiahship and receives the right to call himself a 'Christian'. The author plays on the words 'anointed one' (χριστός), and 'to anoint'/'anointing' (χρίω/χρῖσμα), and sees the messianic anointing prefigured in the Old Testament anointing of priests and kings (see *MC* 3; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 122–132; tr. Yarnold, 176–178). Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 75–77; Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 107–111; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 363–380.

394 Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 77. Because the blessing of the oil is not mentioned as part of the rite itself, Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 67–68 may be right that this ritual took place beforehand.

395 *TD* II.8–9; ed. Rahmani, 126, line 22–130, line 22; tr. Sperry-White, 27–29.

396 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 126, line 22–128, line 2; tr. Sperry-White, 27.

spirit, and for deliverance from every evil".[397] It is clear that this anointing is connected to the preceding renunciation and exorcisms and concludes this phase of ritual deliverance from the Devil. After baptism, the bishop anoints the candidate with "that oil over which the thanksgiving was recited" (ܡܫܚܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܐܡܪ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܬܘܕܝܬܐ) and says over him: "I anoint (ܡܫܚ) you with oil (ܒܡܫܚܐ) in the name of Jesus Christ".[398] From the remark that women were anointed by widows while the priest recited over them,[399] we may induce that this second anointing was of the whole body. Next, the neophytes are led into the church and, after having beseeched God to fill them with the Holy Spirit, the bishop anoints the neophytes one by one by placing a hand upon their foreheads, saying: "Anointing (ܡܫܚܐ), I anoint (ܡܫܚ) [you] in almighty God and in Christ Jesus and in the Holy Spirit, that you may be for him a labourer who has perfect faith, and [that you may be] a vessel pleasing to him".[400] Finally, the bishop seals (ܚܬܡ) the initiates upon their forehead and gives them the kiss of peace.[401] Except for this final sealing, the verb employed for the anointing is always ܡܫܚ.

6.3.9   Acts of John

The Syriac *Acts of John* records three accounts of conversion, two of which contain an anointing. The first one narrates the initiation of a procurator, his nobles, and a whole crowd,[402] the second account concerns the initiation of a crowd.[403] Both events are located in a theatre in Ephesus. Based upon these narratives, Klijn[404] made a reconstruction of the presumed rite of initiation, which I will adapt to my own understanding of the rite. After the preparatory part follows: 1) consecration of the oil and the water[405], 2) Trinitarian confes-

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397   *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, lines 5–8; tr. Sperry-White, 28.
398   *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, lines 25–27; tr. Sperry-White, 28.
399   *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, lines 27–28; tr. Sperry-White, 28.
400   *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 130, lines 16–19; tr. Sperry-White, 29.
401   *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 130, lines 20–22; tr. Sperry-White, 29.
402   Ed. Wright, I, 41–46; tr. Wright, II, 38–42.
403   Ed. Wright, I, 58–59; tr. Wright, II, 53–54.
404   Klijn, "Syriac Acts of John," 221.
405   Klijn put a doxology before the consecration, but I agree with Winkler, *Armenische Initiationsrituale*, 149n106 that this Trinitarian doxology is part of the consecration. After this first doxology and, two more doxologies follow the signing of the oil with the cross. The last one is introduced with: "And again the third time he said …" (ed. Wright, I, 42; tr. Wright, II, 39). This only makes sense if the first doxology is included in the counting, which confirms that it is seen as part of the consecration. Furthermore, Klijn only sees a consecration of the water in the second account ('the third' according to his numbering). It is my contention, however, that the following passage of the first narrative, although not explicitly

sion,[406] 3) stripping, 4) anointing, 5) descent into the water, 6) another Trinitarian confession, 7) threefold immersion with the hand on the head, 8) vesting with white garments, 9) kiss of peace, and finally 10) salutation as bridegroom and youth.

In the first account, the consecration of the oil comprises the following acts: a first Trinitarian doxology, making the sign of the cross over the oil, a second and third Trinitarian doxology, followed by fire blazing forth over the oil while two angels protect the oil with their wings, crying the Trishagion.[407] It is important to note that subsequently the two angels in a similar way hover over the water and cry the Trishagion.

The second account includes an epiclesis invoking the Holy Spirit to dwell upon both the oil and the water, although its contents mainly concern the water. Again fire and angels appear, yet, this time only over the oil, while not the angels but the whole crowd cries out the Trishagion.[408] In the first account, the apostle is kneeling during the consecration, while in the second he is standing. Concerning the anointing, the second account mentions only that they are anointed with oil, but the first narrative distinguishes between the making of the sign of the cross on the forehead with oil[409] and a subsequent anointing of the whole body. No formula for the anointing is mentioned. The terms used for

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designated as such, also describes the ritual, especially because it parallels and is almost similar to the directly preceding consecration of the oil (see below): "And when the oil was consecrated (ܐܬܩܕܫ ܡܫܚܐ), then the holy (man) drew near to the water, and signed it (ܘܚܬܡ ܐܢܘܢ) and said: 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Spirit of holiness, for ever, Amen.' And straightway these two angels came and hovered over the water, and were crying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Father and Son and Spirit of holiness,' after him. And St. John cried after them, 'amen.'" (ed. Wright, I, 42; tr. Wright, II, 39). Also Varghese, *Onctions*, 59, 64–65 considers this a benediction.

406 This (extra) confession is only recorded in the first account. Winkler, *Armenische Initiationsrituale*, 149n106 may be right that this confession must be understood as a reaction of the crowd to the preceding miraculous event and not as a real baptismal confession (no. 6).

407 Although Klijn, "Syriac Acts of John," 221 distinguishes the fire and the angels from the consecration, it is my impression that these phenomena are part of it. Especially because the fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 13–17; Varghese, *Onctions*, 64–65). Only afterwards is it said that "the oil was consecrated" (see n405).

408 Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 129 suggests that the second account is slightly later than the first, because of the greater emphasis on the water and the participation of the crowd in the singing of the Trishagion.

409 ܘܚܬܡ ܠܗ ܥܠܝܗ̇ ܗܘ ܚܬܐ ܕܚܬܡܘܗܝ (ed. Wright, I, 43). According to Varghese, *Onctions*, 62, this is the only occurrence of this expression designating an anointing in a Syriac document.

the oil and the anointing are ⲙⲉⲭⲁ and ⲙⲉⲭ.[410] Similar to the *Acts of Thomas*, the term ⲣⲟⲁⲝⲁ is used in the *Acts of John* as a designation for initiation as a whole and not for one ritual in particular.[411]

As a general observation, anointing and baptism are tightly connected.[412] The Holy Spirit is conferred by both oil and water.[413] Mimicking Christ's baptism, the candidate receives filial adoption through the twin ritual of anointing-baptism.[414] Furthermore, the idea of ownership is present—expressed by the image of a sheep owned by his master—but not specifically related to the anointing.[415]

6.3.10   AR

The only anointing in *AR*, which follows the 'exorcism' and precedes the immersion, consists of a signing on the forehead.[416] The description of the anointing is followed by that of a kneeling/rising. It is said that the "kneeling on one knee (represents) our fall in sin; the rising from kneeling on one knee is a sign of the resurrection of Jesus in whom our whole nature arose".[417] It is not clear, however, whether the kneeling succeeds the signing or portrays the posture in which the candidate is marked.[418]

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410 For ⲙⲉⲭⲁ see e.g. Wright, I, 42 lines 7, 12, 17–18, 22; 58 lines 10, 14; for ⲙⲉⲭ see 43 line 16; 46 line 5; 59 line 15.

411 "Whosoever believe in the Son of God, let him come (and) bathe, and be cleansed of pollution; and as for us, let us go to the place where the font is, and every one who comes, give him the sign (ⲣⲟⲁⲝⲁ), and let him live and not perish" (ed. Wright, I, 53; tr. Wright, II, 49). Cf. Wright, I, 53; tr. Wright, II, 48 and Wright, I, 53; tr. Wright, II, 49. Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 62–63.

412 Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 63–64. To illustrate the close relationship between anointing and baptism, Varghese quotes the following phrase in 64n41: "Brethern and fathers, let us run and *anoint ourselves with this water* …" (his italics). Unfortunately, this 'interesting' expression is the result of a parablepsis by homoeoteleuton of the actual wording: "… let us run and anoint ourselves with this holy oil, and bathe in this water …" (ܗܢ ܢܘܗܒܘܕܠ ܐܡܗܠ ܡܠܗ ܐܟܬܚ ܐܕܡܥܘ ܐܝܚܡ ܐܠܗ ܐܟܥܚܗ) (ed. Wright, I, 44; tr. Wright, II, 41).

413 "Lord God Almighty, let Thy Spirit of holiness come, and rest and dwell upon the oil and upon the water; and let them be bathed and purified from uncleanness; and let them receive the Spirit of holiness through baptism" (ed. Wright, I, 58; tr. Wright, II, 53). Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 63–64.

414 Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 64.

415 Ed. Wright, I, 43; tr. Wright, II, 40.

416 *AR* 6–8; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 36–37.

417 *AR* 9; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 38–39.

418 In the rituals of Theodore and Chrysostom, as we have seen, the initiands are in a kneeling position during the signing. In Narsai, however, the kneeling precedes the signing, which is received while standing.

The "oil (ܡܫܚܐ) is the invincible armour (ܙܝܢܐ) against the adversary".[419] This apotropaic effect also recurs in the reason why the initiand is "imprinted on the forehead (ܚܬܡ ܒܥܝܢܐ, ܡܬܪܫܡ): (since this is) the part on the body that is important, for he becomes fearful to the demons".[420] Although not stated explicitly, it seems that the picture here is similar to that found in Theodore and Narsai: as the forehead is the part of the body by which we confront each other, the mark is put on that particular spot in order to be able to face and ward off the demons.

The meaning of the mark itself is twofold. Firstly, "[b]eing signed is the acknowledgement[421] (ܡܫܬܘܕܥܢܘܬܐ) of the will of the person being baptized".[422] This is an interesting point not found in other sources. The mark on the forehead is a token of the baptizand's free choice to become a member of the Christian community. Secondly, the sign is a mark of ownership. It "is the imprint (ܛܒܥܐ) of the heavenly king which is put (*lit.* falls) on the spiritual soldier".[423]

6.3.11 Barberini Euchologion

The Rite of Constantinople records two anointings, one preceding, one following the bath.[424] First, the bishop consecrates the (olive) oil (ἔλαιον) by breathing upon it three times, sealing (σφραγίζει) it three times and beseeching God "to bless even this oil with the power and operation and indwelling of your Holy Spirit, so that it may be a chrism (χρῖσμα) of incorruption, a shield of righteousness, a renewal of soul and body, turning away every work of the devil, unto deliverance from all evil for those who are anointed (τοῖς χριομένοις) in faith and partake of it".[425] So, the effect of the oil is both prophylactic and apotropaic. Next, after having made three crosses with the oil in the water, the bishop takes some oil on his finger and makes the sign of the cross (σταυροῦ τύπον) upon the forehead, the breast, and the back of the baptizand, and says: "Such a one is anointed (χρίεται) with the oil of gladness (ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως), in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". Then, a deacon anoints (χρίεται) the whole body of the candidate.[426] The gift of the Holy Spirit is ritually

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419 *AR* 6; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 36–37.

420 *AR* 8; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 36–37.

421 Or 'signification', 'denotation', 'indication', 'token', 'symbol', or 'sign'. See Payne Smith, 304b and Sokoloff, 841b.

422 *AR* 7; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 36–37.

423 *AR* 7; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 36–37. The addition between parentheses is his.

424 *BE* 102ᵛ–106ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 129–131; tr. Whitaker, 122–123.

425 *BE* 102ᵛ–103ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 129; tr. Whitaker, 122.

426 *BE* 104ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 130; tr. Whitaker, 122.

connected to the post-baptismal anointing. The bishop anoints the neophyte "with the holy oil (τὸ ἅγιον μύρον), making the sign of the cross (σταυροῦ τύπον) on the forehead and eyes and nostrils and mouth and both ears, saying: The seal (σφραγὶς) of the gift of the Holy Spirit".[427]

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The above discussion of the liturgical sources of Syria and its vicinity displays similarity but also much diversity regarding the anointings. As said earlier, it is generally accepted that the early Syrian rite knew only a pre-baptismal anointing.[428] But what was the nature of this anointing? Pivotal for answering this question is the reading of the initiation accounts in the *Acts of Thomas*. Very influential has been the contribution of Winkler, who defended a linear development with two stages.[429] The first stage, described in chapters 27 and 132, would then consist of only one pre-baptismal anointing, viz. of the head. The character of these anointings would be messianic, like the anointings of the Old Testament kings and priests. A change of *leitmotiv* from messianic to healing, however, would have resulted in the later stage, described in chapters 121 (Syriac) and 157, with two pre-baptismal anointings, one of the head, another of the whole body. As further evidence for her view, Winkler added the observation that only the second stage contains an epiclesis concerning the oil, which would be a later development. Winkler explained the Syrian emphasis on the anointing by its dependence on the baptism of Jesus, which culminated in his anointing by the Spirit.

Although Winkler's thesis is attractive, her position is seriously criticised, especially by Meyers, Spinks, and Bradshaw. Ruth Meyers[430] first of all criticises Winkler's view that the anointing of the whole body is a *second* anointing. She conjectures "that there is in actuality merely a single anointing in which oil is poured upon the head and then rubbed over the entire body". Moreover, she points out that an anointing of the whole body is only mentioned when a woman is baptised and is anointed by another woman. In those cases where a full body anointing is not explicitly mentioned, Meyers suggests, "the oil may have been allowed to run down over the body without further action,

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427   *BE* 106ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 131; tr. Whitaker, 123.
428   Logan, "Post-baptismal Chrismation in Syria" finds evidence for a post-baptismal anointing in second-century Syria in Ignatius' *Letter to the Ephesians* 17.1, the Coptic *Didache* 10.7, and *AC* VII,27. See, however, the criticism of Mueller, "Reconsideration of the Evidence".
429   Winkler, *Armenische Initiationsrituale*, 136–146; "Original Meaning", 64 ff.
430   "Structure," 41.

or perhaps the full body anointing was performed by Thomas, who had also poured the oil, making any reference to his continuing action unnecessary".[431] Such would mean that Winkler's linear development with two stages does not exist, since most rituals would in fact consist of a similar head-body anointing. Therefore, according to Meyers, the variety in the *Acts* is merely a variety of description, not of praxis.

Meyers' proposal would harmonise the different praxes of chapters 120–121 (Syriac), 131–133, 157–158, and possibly 26–27. Yet, her position seems to be challenged by the Greek version of the baptism of Mygdonia in 120–121 where, although a woman is anointed, no reference is made to an anointing of the whole body. If we were to follow Meyers' way of reasoning here, we should have to conclude that, at this time, the ritual does not include a full body anointing. Otherwise, it would have been mentioned. So, a silence on the anointing of the body could imply its absence. But such would suggest that also in other cases where no rubbing of the body is recorded, we must reckon with two theoretical possibilities concerning an anointing of the body: 1) it is absent; 2) it is present, but left unmentioned because no women are initiated. This deprives Meyers' thesis of any explanatory force, however.

A third position is held by, among others, Spinks[432] and Bradshaw,[433] who reject Winkler's linear development and defend, instead, an original variety of praxis. Spinks—who has more elaborately discussed Winkler's reading of the *Acts of Thomas*—maintains, depending on Susan Myers' "Initiation by Anointing", that the Greek accounts of chapters 26–27 and 49 are not in fact pre-baptismal anointings, but initiations by anointing since no water is mentioned.[434] This would imply that Winkler's first stratum witnesses no less than two different patterns: initiation by anointing, and initiation by anointing-baptism. Spinks suggests that the differences between the Syriac and Greek versions and within the narratives themselves do not indicate a linear develop-

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431   Meyers is not very accurate here, however. A pouring of oil without further action is quite different from an explicit rubbing of the body with oil. If the former would suffice, why bother to anoint the body at all and to let women anoint women? So, Meyers' proposal only seems to make sense if we assume that a pouring followed by a smearing of the body was the common practice.

432   "What is 'New'," 23–27; *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 23–24; "Another Reading," 46–50. Cf. Johnson *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 76–82.

433   "Varieties," 65–67; *Search*, 151–153.

434   *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 23; "What is 'new'," 25; "Another Reading," 49. As we have seen, however, this is conjectural and hinges on the interpretation of 'the seal' (σφραγίς). And although it is noteworthy that no water is mentioned in the Greek version of chapters 27 and 49, one must note that in chapter 49 oil is lacking too.

ment, but rather a "variety of coexisting practices".[435] Such a diversity "might have been determined by occasion and space", but also by gender..[436] A pouring on the head would better fit baptism in a river, while a smearing of oil on the whole body would be possible in a cistern or bathing house. Concerning the influence of gender, Spinks follows Meyers' proposal discussed above.[437]

Furthermore, Spinks points out that the invocations of the Spirit combine the themes of new birth/fertility and cleansing/remission of sins, implying that there is no sharp difference of *leitmotiv* between both 'stages'.[438] He also notes that the *Didascalia*, which is contemporary with the *Acts of Thomas*, witnesses to an anointing of the head *and* of the body.[439] All taken together, Spinks opines that "[t]here is nothing in the texts themselves to suggest some chronological development, and no sound reason within the texts themselves for choosing one as more original or more primitive than another".[440] Therefore, he concludes, "different practices in different contexts is an equally valid reading of the texts".[441]

Lastly, Spinks criticises Winkler's proposal of the baptism of Jesus as a paradigm for the Syrian emphasis on the Holy Spirit. He indicates that Winkler's suggestion does not explain the pattern of anointing-baptism itself, since the anointing with the Holy Spirit *follows* Jesus' baptism. Instead, he proposes the incarnation of Jesus—where the Spirit hovers over Mary—followed by baptism as a paradigm for the Syrian sequence.[442]

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435   "What is 'New'," 25.

436   Ibid., 25–26.

437   Ibid., 26–27.

438   *Early and Medieval Rituals*, 23–24; cf. Jones, *Womb of the Spirit*, 77–78. This has not gone unnoticed by Winkler, however, who acknowledges concerning chapter 27 that "the cleansing aspect of the anointing is clearly stated, but attention should be drawn to the compiler's emphasis on associating the oil with the Messiah" and remarks about chapters 121 and 157 that "the theme changes slightly" ("Original Meaning," 65).

439   Ibid., 23.

440   Spinks, "What is 'new'," 27; cf. Jones, *Womb of the Spirit*, 252–253.

441   Ibid., 27.

442   I fully agree with Spinks that Winkler's paradigm of Jesus' baptism and anointing does not explain the Syrian pattern in a satisfactory way. Spinks' own proposal—probably based upon Jones' PhD diss. *Womb of the Spirit*—is interesting and worth further consideration (cf. Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 82 who suggests a 'Pentecost paradigm' behind both the Jordan and the Incarnation model). As already put forward several times in the present study, it seems likely that the Syrian structure was modelled after the pattern of Jewish proselyte initiation (Brock, "Transition," 219; cf. his *Holy Spirit*, 48.; Rouwhorst, "Remarkable Case," 119–121). Yet, such does not exclude the influence of other, parallel, forces like Spinks' Incarnation model. We may wonder, furthermore, what may have been the influence of a passage like Acts 10:44–48, where the Spirit descends on Cornelius and

The view of an original diversity is interesting, but needs some clarification. Spinks seems somewhat ambiguous in what he means by an original 'co-existing diversity'. On the one hand, he points to an actual difference in practice like initiation by anointing-only as contrasted with water baptism. Such concerns a fundamental difference, seemingly not dependent on context and even suggesting a difference in theology. On the other hand, however, he proposes a variety of praxis as a consequence of occasion and space. But such a strongly context-related variety does not in the first place reflect a fundamental difference, implying that even one and the same community could hold different practices dependent on, e.g., the availability of indoor facilities or the season. Furthermore, it is not completely clear how the issue of gender fits into Spinks' model. He seems to agree with Meyers here, but she suggests only a difference of description and not an actual variety of custom. To sum up, Spinks' variety model can be differentiated into three sub-models: a) a fundamental difference in praxis, b) a context related variety, and c) a gender related difference of description, but not necessarily of custom. Only sub-model b seems to harmonise with Spinks' proposal of 'different practices in different contexts'. So, for a fruitful future discussion, it would be helpful to distinguish clearly between the different sub-models and to arrange the arguments accordingly.[443]

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his family before baptism (cf. Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 118–119). And Manson, "Entry into Membership," 29 sees in 1 John 5:7 f. "the raison d'être of the Syrian use" (cf. Bradshaw, *Search*, 148n16).

443 A special challenge for model b, different practices in different contexts, seems to be the following. Firstly, the difference between chapters 27 and 132 against 121 and 157 is not just a matter of one or two anointings or a different *leitmotiv*, but the whole structure differs and the pattern of 121 and 157 seems more developed, including a consecration of the oil. In other words, the differences between the records with a head-body anointing and those with an anointing of the head only not seem to be easily explained by only an appeal to space (or gender). Secondly, how does the 'different practices in different contexts' model account for the custom of initiation by anointing only? Thirdly, the proposed influence of space does not account for the Syriac version of chapters 26–27 where the rite takes place in a bath-house, but the anointing concerns only the head. Space may explain the Greek version of chapters 120–121, where an anointing of the head accords with a baptism outdoors if the κρήνη concerns a natural spring, but not if a fountain in an atrium is meant (Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 777b). Although the latter is an open space in a building, it is surrounded by walls and privacy seems assured. Furthermore, how would one explain the outdoor baptism without any anointing narrated in the Syriac version of chapter 49? All taken together, then, are the differences within the narratives and between the two versions not better interpreted as basically different in pattern? If so, the question remains whether this diversity reflects an 'original situation' or a later development. Interestingly, Myers, "Initiation by Anointing" seems to challenge an original diversity of praxis as she

A final remark concerning the early Syrian practice seems to be appropriate here. When we survey the whole discussion, it is clear that the matter is most complicated. Not only are we faced with a scarcity of early sources, but any interpreter of the most important early source we *do* have, *the Acts of Thomas*, is faced with the difficulty that neither the Greek nor the Syriac version fully presents the original reading. And although the Greek is generally assumed to be more archaic than the Syriac, it does not seem likely that it always faithfully presents the *Urtext*, especially in its liturgical portions.[444] Moreover, Meyers' caution with reference to the Syriac *Acts of John* is certainly also relevant here: "these are narrative descriptions of baptism in an apocryphal work whose primary intent is to witness to Christian faith, not to provide an accurate description of baptism ... While the descriptions most likely reflect to some extent contemporary baptismal practice, they must be interpreted first in their own context".[445] With all these handicaps in mind, one might wonder whether we will ever be able to get a faithful picture of the earliest Syrian practice.

Nevertheless, the fourth- and fifth-century rites show both diversity and similarity. Some liturgies still have the early Syrian pattern of an anointing part—either consisting of an anointing of the head only or of a head-body anointing—followed by immersion (Aphrahat, Ephrem, Narsai, *Acts of John*, *AR*), while the Jerusalem *MC* adds to this a post-baptismal anointing. In others, the pre-baptismal anointing has been doubled or split in two, with or without an additional post-baptismal anointing[446] (Chrysostom, Theodore, *Testamen-*

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leaves open the possibility that the *AT* originally lacked any mention of baptism with water at all (pp. 157–158).

444   Myers, "Initiation by Anointing," 152 argues that the Greek has expanded the prayer in chapter 25, which "illustrates the tendency of the text to grow, as each copyist becomes an editor". She further notes that "[t]he prayer in chapter 25 illustrates how the routine assumption that the Greek represents the older tradition can sometimes be in error" (152n9). (But also the clumsy "the further sealing of the seal" in chapter 27 seems to betray that the text has been tampered with, cf. Klijn, "Baptism," 59–60). Moreover, commenting on the interesting judgement of the fifth-century Spanish bishop Turribius that the *Acts of Thomas exsecrandum est*, "because of its teaching that baptism is not to be performed with water, but with oil alone", Myers remarks: "That Turribius considered the *Acts of Thomas* to contain instructions to use only oil for initiation may indicate that he read a work of greater antiquity than we possess. It is widely recognized that the extant Greek is not a simple translation of the original Syriac. And the fact that the surviving Syriac shows clear signs of embellishment indicates that there was some discomfort with the text. It is possible that the Greek translator had already attempted to 'correct' the work" (p. 158).

445   Meyers, "Structure," 36.

446   It is clear that these are later developments. Even if there had been an original diversity of praxis, such does not discount, therefore, Winkler's suggestion that a change of theological model from a Jordan/John 3 type to a Romans 6 type could, at least partially,

tum Domini, *Barberini Euchologion*). The *Apostolic Constitutions* even has three
pre-baptismal anointings (at least in the case of women) and one succeed-
ing the immersion. Most, if not all, sources attest to an explicit signing on the
forehead, which usually directly succeeds the *syntaxis*. Only the *Testamentum
Domini* witnesses a different pattern with the signing positioned between the
apotaxis and *syntaxis*. The pre-baptismal signing may be seen as messianic,
apotropaic, cathartic, or a mark of ownership. Yet, these motives are not exclu-
sive and some of them may be combined as e.g. Ephrem indicates. The (gift
of the) Holy Spirit is sometimes conferred by both oil and water (Ephrem,
Acts of John, Narsai), other times it is ritually located in one specific act like
the pre-baptismal anointing (*Apostolic Constitutions*), immersion (Chrysos-
tom, Theodore) or the post-baptismal anointing (Jerusalem *MC*, *Testamentum
Domini*, *Barberini Euchologion*). Usually regular olive oil (ܡܫܚܐ/ἔλαιον) is
used (Chrysostom has a mixture of oil and unguent), which may be consecrated
(Ephrem?, Theodore?, Chrysostom, *Apostolic Constitutions*, Narsai, *Acts of John*,
Barberini Euchologion) or exorcised (Jerusalem *MC*?, *Testamentum Domini*).
Except for the *Testamentum Domini*—where the formula is exorcistic—all
mentioned formulas for the anointing are Trinitarian (Theodore, Chrysostom,
Narsai, *Barberini Euchologion*). The making of the sign of the cross on the fore-
head with reference to the pre-baptismal signing is explicitly mentioned by
Chrysostom, the *Acts of John* and the *Barberini Euchologion*. Although Ephrem,
like Narsai, applies ܪܘܫܡܐ for the anointing, it basically refers to initiation as
a whole as in the *Acts of John* (and the earlier *Acts of Thomas*). Chrysostom is
the only Greek source, besides Theodore, that clearly employs σφραγίς for the
signing on the forehead. In others 'the seal' designates a post-baptismal anoint-
ing (Jerusalem *MC*, *Testamentum Domini*, *Barberini Euchologion*). In the *Apos-*

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be responsible for fourth-century changes in pattern, especially the addition of a post-
baptismal anointing, and the shift of the conferring of the Spirit from the anointing to the
bath, and finally to the anointing after immersion. It does not seem convincing or nec-
essary to impute e.g. Chrysostom's association of the Spirit with the water to an original
custom (so Bradshaw, "Varieties," 70–71). If one thing seems clear of the earliest period,
it is that the emphasis was on the anointing which was connected with the Spirit. Brock,
"Transition," 220–221 puts the shift to a Romans 6 type side by side with another devel-
opment. He asserts that, as a result of the Christianisation of the Roman Empire, the
Jewish conceptual model—based upon proselyte initiation by circumcision followed by
immersion—became interchanged for that of Christ's baptism in the Jordan. Although
Christ's baptism had always functioned as the model for baptism, this time it "becomes the
conceptual model for the baptismal rite *as a whole*, and attention is now paid to the fact
that the Holy Spirit only appeared after Christ had gone up from the water. With such an
overall model, there is obviously no room for a pre-baptismal anointing which has impor-
tant associations with the Holy Spirit" (p. 221).

tolic Constitutions the term is applied to the rite as a whole, the post-baptismal signing, and maybe the pre-baptismal signing on the forehead. The most common verbs concerning the signing on the forehead in the Syriac documents are ܡܚܬܡ and ܛܒܥ, while χρίω and ἀλείφω feature most prominently in the Greek sources.

Such is the context for our comparison between the anointings of Theodore and Narsai, to which we will turn now.

6.4   The Rituals Compared

To begin with, the position of the signing differs. While in Narsai the signing is preceded by the testimony of the sponsor and the enrolment, Theodore's ritual directly follows the *syntaxis*. In both rites, the signing naturally follows the preceding rituals. Yet, because of its sacramental character, it is much more than just a confirmation of the foregoing. Caused by the power of the Trinity, the baptizand receives a new position as God's servant. Although Theodore and Narsai are in general agreement here, the differences are noteworthy. As a result of its position, the signing in Theodore has a paradoxical nature. Together with the rising and the spreading of the *orarium*—both absent in Narsai— the signing concludes the foregoing ritual unit, starting with the enrolment. Yet, at the same time, it initiates the mystery, visualised by the new apparel of the bishop, another feature typical for Theodore. Neither the ritual *caesura* after the signing, nor the heavy emphasis on the beginning of the mysteries is present in Narsai. It is notable, though, that Narsai concludes the first liturgical homily with the signing. This textual break suggests a ritual *caesura* analogous to Theodore's rite, although this does not seem warranted by the liturgy itself. Is this a (practical) coincidence, or did Narsai get inspired by Theodore in this respect?

In Theodore's rite, the initiand experiences the signing while still being in the same kneeling posture as during the *apotaxis/syntaxis*. Only after the anointing of the forehead is he raised to his feet by the sponsor. Narsai's candidate, however, is signed in a standing position. It is possible that he was raised by his sponsor, but the text is not clear on this.

Although Narsai does not provide the exact formula for the anointing, he clearly indicates its Trinitarian and passive character, which makes this aspect of the ritual similar to Theodore's. This resemblance is further underscored by the similar rationale for this passive formula: it is God who actually signs; the bishop is just a mediator. How may we evaluate these similarities? We may note that the first clear testimonies of a formula for the anointing are provided by

Theodore and Chrysostom and that this formula is passive. Since these writers also witness the passive *baptismal* formula—which is a later development, the earlier form appears to be active[447]—we may conjecture that the shift from an active to a passive baptismal formula more or less concurred with the introduction of the anointing formula, at least in Western Syria. From there, it may have found its way to the East. The translation of Theodore's catechetical homilies into Syriac may have been one factor among others that contributed to the popularisation of this theologically laden praxis, which also became part of the rite Narsai is commenting on. It is not unthinkable, therefore, that the use of passive formulas in Narsai's rite draws upon a broader Syrian tradition in which the influence of Theodore's catechetical homilies is already traceable.

For both Theodore and Narsai ܪܘܫܡܐ ('sign,' 'mark', 'token', 'signing with the sign of the cross') is the most common term to denote the pre-baptismal signing, but also ܛܒܥܐ ('seal, sign', 'signet', 'stamp') is used. The related verbs ܪܫܡ ('to sign', 'make the sign of the cross')[448] and ܛܒܥ ('to imprint a seal', 'to mark, sign, seal') are also employed by both. Additionally, but less frequently, used by Narsai are ܚܬܡ ('to seal'), ܡܫܚ ('to anoint') and ܢܝܫܐ ('ensign', 'banner', 'standard', 'sign'). The latter may be attributed to Narsai's poetic writing style, in which he is generally closer to Ephrem than to Theodore. Although ܪܘܫܡܐ/σφραγίς is a common term in the Syrian baptismal tradition, it is noteworthy that only Chrysostom, Theodore, and Narsai use the term and its related verb exclusively for the pre-baptismal signing. It is possible, therefore, that we trace an influence of Theodore on Narsai here.

Regular olive oil (ܡܫܚܐ/ἔλαιον) is used in both rituals. Theodore does not employ the single word ܡܫܚܐ, however, but speaks of 'oil of anointing' (ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ) and 'oil of baptism' (ܡܫܚܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ), each of which is employed only once. When we add to this Theodore's silence on the consecration of the oil,[449] it becomes clear that he is not overly concerned with the oil as such. With Narsai we have a completely different situation. He frequently uses the term ܡܫܚܐ, gives much weight to the blessing of the oil, and repeatedly mentions the importance of the oil as the instrument by which the benefits of the Spirit are bestowed on the candidates. In all this, Narsai is much closer to the *Acts of Thomas*, Ephrem, and the *Acts of John* than to Theodore.

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447 See p. 359n462.

448 2,46:16 (2,17; *s* 2,177:7); 2,47:8 (2,19; *s* 2,178:8); 2,47:27 (2,19; *s* 2,178:21); 3,48:27 (3,1; *s* 3,180:3); 3,49:12 (3,1; *s* 3,180:15). Cf. Payne Smith, 551a.

449 Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 32 puts forward that a consecratory prayer over the oil as attested by the *Acts of Thomas*, the *Acts of John* and Narsai only survives in the later formularies of the East Syriac, Melkite and Maronite rites.

This leads us to a striking difference between both mystagogues. In Theodore, the Spirit plays no role whatsoever as regards the signing (and the anointing of the body) and is only introduced at the water bath. For Narsai, however, the Spirit is pivotal for the realisation of the positive effects of the signing. Although the benefits of the anointing are caused by the Trinity as a whole, the Spirit functions as its primary agent. Yet, the (wealth of the) Spirit is conferred not only by the oil, but by the entirety of the twin ritual of anointing-baptism. Such a close association of the signing with baptism and of the Holy Spirit with both rituals is not found in Theodore. Narsai is closer to Ephrem and the *Acts of John* here.

Although Narsai is still more aware of the original relation between the anointing and circumcision as a mark of ownership and identity than Theodore, both advance the idea of 'ownership' by likening the ܪܘܫܡܐ to the brand of a sheep and the tattoo of a soldier. The idea of the candidate being a soldier (ܦܠܚܐ) performing military service (ܦܠܚܘܬܐ) is definitely the dominant one in Theodore, stressing the candidate's service to the King in the present and in the Kingdom to come. Albeit that Narsai gives much more weight to the sheep image than Theodore, this traditional concept is clearly rivalled by the soldier image, which may indicate an indebtedness to Theodore. Yet, since the notion of ownership expressed by the soldier image is also present in *AR*, an exclusive dependence on Theodore seems unlikely. Nevertheless, the soldier image is the more developed concept in Narsai by its connection to the notion of spiritual warfare. In this way, the soldier image not only expresses the notion of ownership as such, but also the accompanying and ongoing battle against evil powers. Equipped by the shield of the sign and the armour of the oil, the believer is ready to serve in God's army and to face Satan and his demons. Narsai's term 'armour' (ܙܝܢܐ) is also found in Theodore and *AR*. The former speaks of "the complete armour of the Spirit" (ܙܝܢܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ),[450] referring to the benefits bestowed upon the baptizand by the liturgical mysteries following the signing. Much closer to Narsai's "an armour is the oil" (ܙܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܡܫܚܐ),[451] however, is the phrase "oil is the invincible armour" (ܡܫܚܐ ... ܙܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܠܐ ܡܙܕܟܝܢܐ) of *AR*.[452] Unlike Theodore, both Narsai and *AR* explicitly connect the 'armour' to the oil. It seems, therefore, that Narsai mainly leans on *AR* here.[453]

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450   2,47:34 (2,20); *S* 2,178:26.

451   22,366:27; *S* :16.

452   *AR* 6; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 36–37.

453   And probably on the Peshitta version of Eph. 6:11, 13, where is spoken of the "armour of God" (ܙܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ). Although this passage is likely to be the main source for the whole

As a variant approach, Narsai pictures the battle with evil powers as a contest of athletes. It is interesting to note that Chrysostom employs the same picture, especially because both apply it to the signing on the forehead and not, as would seem more natural, to the anointing of the body. Although the similarity is striking, it does not seem to warrant a direct relationship between Narsai and Chrysostom. The anointing of an athlete for a wrestling match is a common thing in antiquity and the application to baptism is already witnessed by Theophilus of Antioch.[454] Moreover, the athlete image is also found in 2 Tim. 2:5[455] and, with reference to Christ, in the *Acts of Thomas*.[456] Since there are no clear indications that Narsai has read Chrysostom, it is more likely, then, that the resemblance goes back to a common tradition.[457]

Contrary to Narsai, Theodore does not relate the idea of spiritual warfare to the signing in general or to the soldier image in particular. The demons, who are only mentioned in passing, are not actively confronted or overcome by military power. Instead, they are frightened by the sign as a token of παρρησία. This παρρησία, which expresses the freedom and openness the Christians have to

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idea of protection against evil powers, the text does not yet make the relation between 'armour' and anointing or oil.

454 Ferguson, *Baptism*, 247. Cf. Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 64–65 for some references in other Church Fathers.

455 The author uses the verb ἀθλέω, but not the noun ἀθλητής.

456 Chapter 39 (near the end) and 50 (fourth 'Come'); Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 209 and 218; tr. Wright, II, 181 and 189. Greek: ed. Bonnet, 157 and 166; tr. Elliott, 464 and 468. Wright translates ܐܬܠܝܛܐ with 'athlete' in both instances; Elliott renders ἀθλητής with 'champion' and 'combatant' respectively. Cf. Varghese, *Onctions*, 86–87 and Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 202–204.

457 In a personal correspondence with me, Sebastian Brock wisely remarked concerning the issue: "Though the shared use of the image is striking, one needs to remember that the literature that survives to us is but a fraction of what must have been circulating at the time (people often seem to forget this), so I would say that one needs to be careful before drawing conclusions in this matter." (e-mail message to author (2)) Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Chrysostom and Narsai share several particular features. Both emphasise that the sign equips and protects the neophyte in the ongoing spiritual battle against Satan and his troops. What is particularly striking is that both highlight that Satan and the demons do not dare to look upon the sign. Chrysostom explains that by looking upon the sign, the eyes of the Devil are blinded as by a beam of light or the rays of the sun. Interestingly, although Narsai does not mention the effect of blinding, he makes the following comment: "The name of the Divinity looks out from the sign on the forehead; and the eyes of the crafty ones are ashamed to look upon it. The second Sun has shone from on high on the head of man; and with His beams He drives away error, the second darkness" (22,368:9–16; s :8–10). This picture is surprisingly similar to Chrysostom's. If Narsai was not directly influenced by Chrysostom, one might wonder whether both draw on a similar source or strand of tradition.

approach God as their Father, plays an important role in Theodore's thinking in general and in his treatment of the signing in particular. By the sign on his forehead, the candidate shows friend and foe that he possesses great παρρησία.

It is all the more remarkable, then, that the whole idea is completely lacking in Narsai. Instead, the East Syrian poet exchanges Theodore's παρρησία for the Trinity. The consecrated oil is portrayed as a signet by which the three names of the Divinity are marked upon the initiand's forehead. The demons are overcome by the sight of the Divine names, not the baptizand's παρρησία. Narsai's concern with the Trinity is clearly antiheretical and probably reflects the theological discussions of the time. Despite this different atmosphere, both mystagogues connect the apotropaic power of the mark to its visible position on the forehead. Since, however, *AR* also makes the connection, Narsai may have drawn upon both *AR* and Theodore here.[458]

To the concepts of ownership and protection, Narsai further adds the idea of healing and cleansing. He depicts the bishop as a physician who operates on the unclean and sick initiand and heals him by the drug of the oil. Considering that the notion of healing and cleansing is absent in Theodore, but present in the *Acts of Thomas* and Ephrem, Narsai is closer to the latter two in this respect.

A final remark concerning eschatology. Although both mystagogues put initiation as a whole within an eschatological framework—the rite is a type of the reality to come—we may note that only Theodore touches upon the eschato-

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458   It is noteworthy, though, that, both Theodore and *AR* remark that the forehead is the most significant part of the body, a feature not explicitly mentioned by Narsai. Compare *AR* 8: "Being imprinted (ܡܬܛܒܥ) on the forehead: (since this is) the part on the body (ܦܓܪܐ) that is important (ܡܝܬܪ) ..." (ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 36–37) with Theodore's "... you first receive a stamp on your forehead (ܒܝܬ ܥܝܢܝܟ), which is a part of the head (ܐܝܬܝܗ ܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܪܝܫܐ), the most honourable part of the whole body ... (ܡܢܬܐ ܕܡܝܩܪܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܓܘܫܡܐ)" (2,46:29 (2,18); *S* 2,177:18). (My rendering is in agreement with *T&D* and *BS*. Mingana's translation "... that part of your head which is higher than the rest of your body", though possible, is unnecessarily ambiguous as the term 'higher', used figuratively here, is not clearly enough distinguished from Theodore's following remark that the forehead "is placed above all your body and above your face" in the physical sense.) Furthermore, Theodore (2,46:28 (2,18); *S* 2,177:16–17) and *AR* 7 (ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 36–37) share the term 'heavenly King' (ܡܠܟܐ ܫܡܝܢܐ) with reference to the soldier image. (In a similar context, however, Narsai uses the term 'King of kings' (ܡܠܟ ܡܠܟܐ; 22,366:29; *S* :18), which could be chosen here to fit the twelve syllable pattern.) Because of these similarities, Brock, "Commentaries," 54 leaves open whether *AR* is dependent on Theodore here, or that both draw on a common catechetical tradition. Brock "Commentaries," 56 finally suggests "that *AR* belongs to a catechetical tradition very close to Theodore, but perhaps slightly earlier". In that case, the resemblance could reflect a common heritage. But if *AR* indeed predates Theodore, why could the latter not have used the former?

logical character of the signing as such. This becomes clear by his interpretation of the bishop's apparel, his use of 2 Cor. 3:12 with reference to παρρησία, and his perspective of the sign ultimately preparing the believer for the future heavenly service.

6.5   Conclusion

In Theodore's rite, the initiand experiences the signing while still being in the same kneeling posture as during the *apotaxis/syntaxis*. Only after the anointing of the forehead is he raised to his feet by the sponsor. Narsai's candidate, however, is signed in a standing position. It is possible that he was raised by his sponsor, but the text is not clear on this.

The rituals clearly differ with reference to its position in the rite, and, by consequence, its function. The nature of Theodore's signing is paradoxical; on the one hand, it begins the mystery (indicated by the bishop's apparel), while, on the other hand, it concludes the preceding ritual unit (prayer-*apotaxis/syntaxis*) (indicated by the *orarium*). Neither this paradoxical nature, nor the visual indicators of the bishop's attire and the *orarium* are present in Narsai.

Striking is the absence of the Holy Spirit in Theodore as compared to the importance of the Trinity's Agent in Narsai. In particular, the close relation of anointing to baptism, and of both to the Spirit, means that Narsai is generally closer to the *Acts of Thomas*, Ephrem, and the *Acts of John*, than to Theodore. Not less remarkable is the absence in Narsai of Theodore's important concept of παρρησία.

Possible influences of Theodore on Narsai are the exclusive use of ܪܘܫܡܐ/σφραγίς for the signing on the forehead, the soldier image, and maybe the distribution of the rituals over both liturgical homilies. An influence of Theodore on the broader East Syrian tradition may be traceable in the use of the passive Trinitarian formula.

Typical features of Narsai are his elaboration on the protective aspect of the ܪܘܫܡܐ concerning the military campaign against Satan and his demons, and his close association of the mark with the Trinity. Both characteristics reveal that Narsai was not only reticent in borrowing from Theodore, but made his own choices deliberately, not afraid to differ markedly from his esteemed Teacher. In all this, Narsai shows himself to be a creative poet and an independent thinker in the line of Ephrem.

Baptism

7.1 Theodore of Mopsuestia

7.1.1 *Description and Discussion of the Ritual*

Although probably inauthentic,[1] the *synopsis* of baptismal homily 3 nicely summarises the ritual of baptism:

> You draw nigh unto the holy baptism, and first take off all your garments, after which you are duly and thoroughly anointed with holy Chrism. The priest begins and says: "So-and-so is anointed in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Then you descend into the water that has been consecrated by the benediction of the priest, who, clad in the aforesaid apparel, stands up and approaches his hand, which he places on your head and says: "So-and-so is baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He places his hand on your head and says, "in the name of the Father," and with these words he causes you to immerse yourself in the water. If you were allowed to speak there you would have said "Amen!", but you simply plunge into the water and incline your head downwards[2]; and the priest says "and of the Son" and causes you with his hand to immerse yourself again while inclining also your head downwards;[3] and the priest says "and of the Holy Spirit" and presses you down and causes you again to immerse in a similar way. After you have left that place, you put on a very radiant garment, and the priest draws near and signs you on your forehead and says: "So-and-so is signed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."[4]

The initiands probably received their baptism at the Easter Vigil.[5] Theodore does not mention it, but there is little doubt that the apex of the catechumen's

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1 See p. 14.

2 Lit. "and you raise (ܪܠܗ) your head". Mingana considers this movement as part of the immersion, but it actually seems to indicate the raising of the head afterwards. The picture is the same, though.

3 See n2.

4 3,48:6–25; *s* 3,179:9–180:2.

5 In his first catechetical homily, Theodore says: "It is with these wonderful things that our discourse wishes to deal, and it is to the delight of these mysteries that we have been invited,

initiation took place in the *baptisterium*.[6] Above all, the candidate undresses himself before the full body anointing:

> You draw, therefore, near to the holy baptism, and before everything you take off your garments (ܠܒܘܫܝܟ). As when Adam was formerly naked and was in nothing ashamed of himself, but after having broken the commandment and become mortal, he found himself in need of an outer covering (ܬܟܣܝܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܠܒܪ), so also you, who are ready to draw near to the gift of the holy baptism so that through it you may be born afresh and become symbolically immortal, rightly remove your covering (ܬܟܣܝܬܟ), which is a sign of mortality and a reproving mark of that (Divine) decree by which you were brought low to the necessity of a covering (ܠܒܘܫܐ).[7]

Theodore instructs the initiand that he has to take off his garments. The *synopsis* added later is more explicit, however, and speaks of the removal of *all* (ܟܠܗ) garments.[8] Although the *synopsis* may reflect later liturgical praxis, several indi-

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because the time of the great festival of the holy Passover (ܘܗܘ ܡܛܠ ܕܙܒܢܐ ܕܥܐܕܐ ܪܒܐ ܕܦܨܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ) leads us to teach them." (1,18:22 (1,1); *s* 1,117:15–16).

6 For a discussion of early Christian baptisteries, see especially Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien* (cf. the earlier studies of Khatchatrian: *Baptistères paléochrétiens* and *Origine et typologie*; see further *RAC*, s.v. "Baptisterium"; Brandt, "Early Christian Baptisteries"; Jensen, *Living Water*, 179–232; Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture*, 203–214; Davies, *Architectural Setting of Baptism*, 1–42). More than two-thirds of the baptisteries were connected to or built into the church building (Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, 15). The remainder were separate buildings, usually near a church. Although baptisteries initially may have been erected in Episcopal cities, a church with a baptistery is not necessarily the bishop's since baptisteries have been found in small towns, pilgrim sites, monasteries, and castle churches, and some cities had more than one (Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, 2; cf. *Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, s.v. "Baptistery"). The oldest known baptistery (mid-third cent.) is that of Dura-Europos, located at the northwest corner of the church (a rebuilt private house) (Ferguson, *Baptism*, 440–443). Baptisteries could have different shapes (Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, 17–20). Most are rectangular or square. The latter is more common in the East, especially in Greece and Syria. Octagonal baptisteries are particularly attested in the northwest of the Roman empire. Other possible forms are circular, semi-circular (apse), cross-shaped, and hexagonal. Especially the inner room of the baptistery, were the font was located, could be highly decorated.

7 3,54:3–12 (3,8); *s* 3,185:25–186:7.

8 "... and you first take off all your garments" (ܘܡܩܕܡ ܫܩܠ ܐܢܬ ܠܟܠܗ ܠܒܘܫܝܟ ܩܕܡܐܝܬ) (3,48:6; *s* 3,179:9). It is notable that the similar phrase in Theodore's text lacks the object marker -ܠ before ܟܠܗ: "... and before everything, you take off your garments." (ܘܡܩܕܡ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܫܩܠ ܐܢܬ ܠܒܘܫܝܟ) (3,54:3–4 (3,8); *s* 3,185:25–26). This slight deviation makes one wonder whether the one reading arose from the other. An undeliberate *parablepsis* is easily imagined here. But

cations in the text itself lead to the conclusion that the initiand undressed completely. Firstly, it is said that he takes off his ܠܒܘܫܐ. This term may denote a single garment as well as the collective 'garments' or 'clothing'.[9] Both meanings coincide here as the 'clothing' of the candidate at this stage of the rite only consists of his under-garment[10] (since he removed his outer garment before the *apotaxis/syntaxis*).[11] Besides, when only the 'outer garment' is meant—so concerning the exorcisms—the term ܠܒܘܫܐ ܒܪܝܐ is used.[12] With reference to the penitential prayer (and *apotaxis/syntaxis*) we have seen that ܬܟܣܝܬܐ is used synonymously with ܠܒܘܫܐ ܒܪܝܐ.[13] In the present context, however, it is clear that ܬܟܣܝܬܐ concerns the 'covering' of the naked body in general, not a particular garment. Secondly, the nakedness of the candidate is compared to Adam's. Because of his disobedience, the ancestor of humanity lost his immortality and needed clothes to cover his nakedness. Reversely, by removing his covering—the symbol of mortality[14]—the initiand symbolically returns to Adam's state of original innocence. Such a parallel seems to make sense only if total nudity is involved.[15] Thirdly, the undressing is directly followed by the full body anointing, which obviously requires complete nudity.[16]

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    also a wilful adaptation cannot be excluded. In the first case, it seems impossible to establish the original reading. In the second, we may conjecture that the reading of the *synopsis* is secondary because of its more explicit character. Whatever may be the original reading, it seems rather certain that the candidates were stark naked as will be discussed below.

9   Cf. Payne Smith, 234a; Sokoloff, 667b.

10   *T&D* and *BS* have "tout ton vêtement" and "Kleidung" respectively.

11   See p. 183. Assuming that the renunciation and adherence took place on Holy Saturday. If those preceding rituals occurred the day before, on Holy Friday, after which the initiands went home and appeared fully dressed again the next evening, ܠܒܘܫܐ may include the outer garment. But even then, ܠܒܘܫܐ could still refer to the under-garment if the rite continued where it ended the day before and the baptizands were expected to appear in their under-garments at the beginning of the ritual.

12   See p. 133n36.

13   See p. 138n62.

14   It is notable that Theodore does not speak of 'sin', but of 'mortality' (cf. Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 241). We will come back to this in 'The Rites Compared' below.

15   Which does not necessarily imply, though, that men and women were exposed to each other's nakedness, as is asserted by Jensen, *Living Water*, 166. According to Jensen, Theodore "argued that nudity in baptism signified the return of the recipients to the innocence of Adam and Eve before the fall and that being naked together in the baptistery symbolized the original man and women [*sic*] in Paradise—naked and unashamed". This goes beyond what Theodore is saying, however. He only discusses the symbolic meaning of the disrobing of the individual candidate and does not draw the parallel between Adam and Eve and the different sexes in the baptistery. We remain ignorant, therefore, how things were practically arranged.

16   Guy, "Naked Baptism", arguing that the Christian attitude towards nakedness would not

During the anointing of the body, presided by "the one who has been found worthy of the honour of priesthood"—probably a presbyter[17]—the bishop consecrates the water. Theodore informs his audience that the water

> has been consecrated by the benediction of the priest, as you are not baptised only with ordinary water, but with the water of the second birth, which cannot become so except through the coming of the Holy Spirit (on it). For this it is necessary that the priest should have beforehand made use of clear words, according to the rite of the priestly service, and asked God that the grace of the Holy Spirit might come on the water and impart to it the power both of conceiving that awe-inspiring child and becoming a womb to the sacramental birth ...[18]
>
> It is owing to the fact that the nature of the water does not possess all these attributes, which are implanted in it at our immersion by the working of the Holy Spirit, that the priest makes use beforehand of his priestly service and of clear words and benedictions, written for the purpose, and

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allow naked females to be seen by the male clergy, holds the opinion that stark nudity during baptism was exceptional. Theodore's text would confirm this hypothesis (p. 140). Admitting that Theodore once instructs the initiands to remove their garments (the text under consideration), he points to the two others instances where only the removal of the outer garment is mentioned and concludes from this that the nakedness was not total. But of course, this is flawed reasoning since the removal of only the outer garment concerns the ritual part from the exorcisms until the signing on the forehead, whereas the removal of all garments refers to the whole body anointing and baptism. The candidate proceeds through different ritual stages and the dress of one stage cannot be used as evidence for that of another. As the above amply shows, there is little doubt that the initiand was baptised stark naked. Theodore's testimony agrees on this with most other sources (see below, "The Rites Contextualised"; see also Jensen, *Living Water*, 159–166; Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes," 265–266). Jensen, *Baptismal Imagery*, 160 adduces an interesting additional argument for baptismal nudity from iconography. Although the earlier images depicted Jesus as a naked child, later iconography shows him as a full grown naked(!) adult (see the mosaics on the ceiling of the fifth- and sixth-century Orthodox and Arian baptisteries in Ravenna). "These representations demonstrate that baptismal nudity was required, for it is difficult to imagine candidates wearing clothes (or even simple undergarments) directly below an image of the immersion of their naked Savior." John Moschus relates the interesting story of the monk Conon who is embarrassed to anoint and baptise a beautiful Persian woman (*Pratum spirituale* 3, "Vita Cononis"; summarised in Smith, "Garments of Shame," 222n21). On his flight from the monastery, John the Baptist appears to him in a vision and three times makes the sign of the cross over his privates. The monk returns to the monastery, baptises the woman, and is not hindered by any sexual feeling anymore during the remaining twelve years of his office.

17   See p. 56.
18   3,54:34–55:7 (3,9); *s* 3,187:2–8.

prays that the grace of the Holy Spirit come upon the water and prepare it with His holy and awe-inspiring presence for the task of performing all these things, so that it may become a reverential womb for the second birth, and so that those who descend into it may be fashioned afresh by the grace of the Holy Spirit and born again into a new and virtuous human nature.

> *When the water has been perfected by the coming of the Holy Spirit and has received such a power,* you plunge into it …[19]

Unlike other rituals, the consecration of the water is not fully described but summarised, probably because Theodore's primary aim is to explain to the catechumens the rituals they will experience themselves, and the consecration of the water is not witnessed by them.[20] The reason why Theodore does not leave the ritual completely unmentioned, however, is clear: it explains the sacramental character of the water as a life-giving womb.[21]

Wearing the same apparel as during the signing on the forehead,[22] the bishop consecrates the water making use of *"prescribed words and benedictions*[23] (ܚܠܟ ܣܬܡܩܬ ܪܩܢܬܡ ܘܒܘܪܟܬܐ) and prays that the grace of the Holy Spirit come (ܐܬܐ)[24] upon the water …".[24] In a similar passage, Theodore speaks of *"fixed words"*[25] (ܚܢܝܐ ܩܕ ܩܠ ܣܬܡܩܬ).[26] This suggests the

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19   3,56:20–33 (3,10); *S* 3,188:24–189:9. The phrase in italics is my own translation of: ܚܡܠ ܟܕ. ܗܟܢ ܚܘܘܝܬܗ ܘܠܬܚܒܕܐ ܘܕܢܩܒܠܬ ܘܥܢܢܬ ܣܠܟ ܕܐܝܟ ܐܗܘܐ. Mingana's rendering is somewhat imprecise in both word choice and syntax: "When the water has been prepared for this and has received such a power by the coming of the Holy Spirit". Cf. *T&D*: "Alors, quand l'eau a été parfaite par la venue de l'Esprit-Saint, et qu'elle a pris une telle vertu …" and *BS*: "Sobald also das Wasser vollkommen ist durch die Ankunft des Heiligen Geistes und es solche Kraft empfangen hat …".

20   Cf. Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes," 186.

21   The ritual of the consecration of the water is old and already attested by Tertullian (*On Baptism* 4; ed. and tr. Evans, *Baptism*, 11). It seems that the ritual developed with the growing practice of baptising in fonts, instead of 'living water' (Fisher, "Consecration of Water," 41–42).

22   3,58: 26–33 (3,14); *S* 3,191:15–20.

23   My own translation. Literally it says something like "fixed, determined/decreed/composed words and benedictions" (cf. Payne Smith, 159a, 366b), so *BS*: "bestimmte, vorgesehene Worte und Segnungen". Mingana renders "clear words and benedictions, written for the purpose" (see the quote above). *T&D* suggest another possibility with ܡܩܬ having the meaning of 'consecrated' (Sokoloff, 1001b): "formules consacrées et de bénédictions". I would like to thank Kees den Biesen and Father Sait for their stimulating discussion concerning the translation of this Syriac phrase.

24   3,56:22–25 (3,10); *S* 3,189:1–3.

25   My own translation (cf. *T&D* and *BS*). Mingana renders "clear words".

26   3,55:3 (3,9); *S* 3,187:6.

use of fixed formulas. The invoking of the Holy Spirit identifies the consecration as an epiclesis,[27] which seems to be of the more archaic 'come' type (instead of 'send')[28] since the bishop "prays that the grace of the Holy Spirit *come* (ܬܐܬܐ) upon the water".[29] Pseudo-Dionysius mentions that the consecration included a threefold pouring of oil into the water.[30] The cursory character of Theodore's description makes us reticent to conclude that such a pouring of oil was absent in his ritual.

After the concurrent rituals of the total body anointing and the consecration of the water, the baptizand descends into the water to be baptised.[31] The individual character of the ritual—it is the bishop himself who baptises the initiands one by one—coincides with Theodore addressing the individual baptizand in the singular,[32] and so confirms the earlier finding that the character of the ritual (collective or individual) coincides with the way Theodore addresses his audience (in the plural or in the singular).[33] Since Theodore similarly addresses the *individual* candidate concerning the preceding undressing and full body anointing,[34] we may safely assume that these too are individual rituals. The initiands undress, are anointed and baptised one after another.

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27 Cf. Quasten, "Blessing," 312; Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 262, 265. Quasten asserts that the difference between Theodore and Cyril of Jerusalem in this respect—Cyril stresses the presence of Christ in the water, not the Holy Spirit—is due to the fourth-century theological development concerning the Holy Spirit, which resulted in an increasing prominence of the third person of the Trinity in theology and liturgy. This agrees with my own observation above (p. 261), that in the AT it is not the third Person of the Trinity, but the power of Christ that is invoked.

28 Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 85, 89.

29 Italics mine.

30 "With sacred invocations he [the bishop, NW] consecrates the water, completing this by pouring the most holy ointment three times into it, each pouring being made in the form of the sign of the cross. With every pouring of the holy ointment he sings that sacred song which God inspired in the prophets" (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* II,2.7; ed. Heil & Ritter, *Ecclesiastica hierarchia, 72*; tr. Luibheid, "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy", 203).

31 3,54:33–34 (3,8; *s* 3,187:1); 3,56:32–33 (3,10; *s* 3,189:9).

32 E.g. "you descend (ܢܚܬܬ) into the water" (3,54:33–34 (3,8); *s* 3,187:1); "These things dealing with birth happen to you (ܠܟ) in the water because you were fashioned (ܐܬܓܒܠܬ) at the beginning from earth and water, and having fallen (ܢܦܠܬ) later into sin you assumed (ܩܢܝܬ) a thorough corruption through the sentence of death." (3,57:2–6 (3,11); *s* 3,189:14–17); "The priest stands up and approaches his hand, which he places on your head (ܪܫܟ) ..." (3,58:24–25 (3,14); *s* 3,191:14); "After this you go out (ܣܠܩ ܐܢܬ) of the water." (3,63:11 (3,19); *s* 3,196:17).

33 See p. 130 and p. 184.

34 "You draw, therefore nigh (ܩܪܒ ܐܢܬ) unto the holy baptism ... you take off your garments (ܫܠܚܡ ܥܠ ܐܢܬ) ... after you have taken off your garments (ܓܠܝܬ ܠܟ ܠܒܘܫܝܟ), you are

Having descended into the font[35], the candidate is baptised by three identical immersions. During the whole ritual, the bishop—still wearing his liturgical vestment—holds his hand on the initiand's head and presses it down at each immersion, while the candidate bows and immerses his head.[36] In this way, a full immersion occurs. Since the fonts were not neck-deep, it seems most likely that the candidates were in a sitting or kneeling position, with the upper part of their bodies or only their heads above the water.[37]

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rightly anointed (ܐܬܡܫܚܬ ܐܢܬ) ... After these things have happened to you (ܠܘܬܟ) ... you descend (ܢܚܬܬ) into the water ...” (3,54:3–34 (3,8); s 3,185:25–187:1).

35 Fonts could have different shapes. The most common are circular (thirty percent), cross-shaped (sixteen percent), rectangular (fourteen percent), octagonal (eleven percent), and square (nine percent) (Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, 27–28). All of these shapes, except for the cross-shape, are already found in the fourth century (Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, 61–68). The majority of the fonts was positioned in the centre of the baptismal room (Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, 17, 28). Next in place are fonts with an eastward orientation, especially current in the oriental dioceses of the patriarchate of Antioch (Ben-Pechat, “Paleochristian Baptismal Fonts,” 184–185). The dimensions of the fonts vary widely. The font of Dura-Europos is 1.0 by 0.6 metre, while the baptistery of Ambrose has a diameter of 2.8 metres (Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, 50). The usual depth of the pools in this era is about 1.0 metre (Ristow, *Frühchristliche Baptisterien*, 50). Fonts of the fifth century are slightly smaller.

36 “The priest places his hand on your head and says ‘of the Father,’ and with these words he causes you to immerse yourself in water, while you obediently follow the sign of the hand of the priest and immediately, at his words and at the sign of his hand, immerse yourself in water. By the downward inclination of your head ... You, therefore, immerse and bow [ܬܠܐ = lit. ‘raise’, NW] your head while the priest says ‘and of the Son,’ and causes you with his hand to immerse again in the same way. ... Then the priest says ‘and of the Holy Spirit’ and likewise presses you down into the water, while you immerse yourself and look downwards as a sign (ܐܬܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܚܬ ܐܢܬ) ...” (3,62:19–63:11 (3,18–19); s 3,195:18–196:17). The phrase “and causes you with his hand to immerse again in the same way” (ܘܡܨܒܥ ܗܘ ܠܟ ܒܐܝܕܗ ܕܬܐܡܘܕ ܬܘܒ ܒܗ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ), which concerns the second immersion, is translated by BS as: “Und wiederum legt er dir die Hand auf und taucht dich ein”. But this is not warranted by the Syriac and gives the wrong impression that the bishop had removed his hand from the candidate's head after the first immersion.

37 Being fully immersed in this posture requires a font depth between 0.5 and 0.8 metre, depending on the person's height. This agrees well with the archaeological data (see n35). Although Theodore clearly testifies of full immersion, scholars disagree whether this was the common mode of baptism. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 849–852 asserts that both the documents and the archaeological data support total immersion. Another position is represented by Jensen, *Living Water*, 137–142 who maintains that the evidence is ambiguous. Admitting that the textual evidence supports full immersion, she opines that both iconography and archaeology indicate that baptism was usually performed by affusion. Jensen believes that the documents describe the ideal, while iconography and architecture reflect the reality. To begin with the archaeological data, Jensen, *Living Water*, 137 seems to exaggerate when she states that “[m]any—if not most—surviving baptismal fonts are too

Baptism is performed in the name of the triune God. The first immersion is accompanied by uttering "*in the name*[38] of the Father", the second by "of the Son", and the third by "of the Holy Spirit".[39] Earlier in his discourse, however, Theodore gives a longer formula when he informs the baptizand that the bishop "stands up and approaches his hand, which he places on your head, and says: 'So-and-so is baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (ܡܬܥܡܕ ܦܠܢ ܒܫܡ ܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ)".[40] Because of this, Mazza[41] asserts that here we are dealing with two different formulas belonging to two different rituals. The first ritual precedes the immersions and consists of an imposition of the hand accompanied by the passive formula "So-and so is baptised …". This passive formula, which is not the baptismal formula, introduces baptism and summarises its theology. The second ritual, which Mazza

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shallow to have allowed submersion". As mentioned above, the fonts were usually deep enough to allow full immersion, assuming that the baptizand was in a sitting or kneeling posture (Ferguson, *Baptism*, 819–852). This does not imply that baptism was always performed by immersion, but the textual evidence may be more in harmony with the archaeological data than Jensen suggests. But pivotal for Jensen's argument is the iconography. The images usually depict "a small nude youth or child standing in or under a stream of water, a larger, clothed male with his right hand on the youth's head, and a dove hovering above both figures" (Jensen, *Living Water*, 5). This suggests, she opines, "that water was poured upon recipients while they stood in the pool" (p. 137). I am not convinced, however, that this matter is as clear-cut as Jensen suggests. She alleges that, although basically depicting Christ's baptism by John the Baptist, the scene contains typological elements (pp. 26–29) as well as references to common liturgical practice, like pouring water over a naked candidate and the post-baptismal imposition of hands (p. 28, 175). In this way, the image conflates ritual acts which are normally separated in time and space (p. 177). But let alone that the pouring of water is hardly, if ever, mentioned by the textual sources, it is notable that the images do not normally portray the administrator as pouring water, but as holding his hand on the head of a standing baptizand (cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 851). So, if the imposition of hands indeed refers to the post-baptismal confirmation—which the candidates probably underwent while standing—is the standing posture not better explained as referring to *that* particular ritual? This also explains the presence of the dove, a type of the Holy Spirit, who descended on Christ after his baptism.

38 The phrase in italics is my addition and renders ܒܫܡ (*S* 3,195:18). Mingana's version lacks this phrase.

39 3,62:19–63:11 (3,18–19); *S* 3,195:18–196:17. During the whole ritual, the candidate remains completely silent. Nevertheless, Theodore suggests the baptizand's consent: "If you were allowed to speak at that time, you would have said: 'Amen,' a word which we believe to mean that we subscribe to the things said by the priest …" (3,62:26–29; *S* 3,195:23–26.). Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes," 188 recognises here a far echo of the Western baptismal interrogation.

40 3,58:24–26 (3,14); *S* 3,191:14–15.

41 "Formula battesimale," 26–28.

identifies as an invocation (*epiclesis*),[42] consists of the three immersions and is accompanied by a baptismal formula without a verb: "In the name of the Father … and of the Son … and of the Holy Spirit". Mazza indicates that this formula is similar to that found in the Syriac *Acts of John* (11, 40). He further contends that the first ritual has its origin in the immersion ritual and became a separate ritual after the introduction of the passive formula, which, Mazza suggests, may have been derived from the formula of the *syntaxis*: "And I engage myself, and believe and am baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".[43]

Mazza's thesis is challenging, but needs a closer look. Interestingly, Mazza himself admits that the summary of the rituals in the *synopsis*[44] induces the impression that we have to do with two descriptions of the same ritual. But, so he argues, Theodore's own explanation in the catechesis makes clear that in fact two different rituals are referred to.[45] Regrettably, Mazza does not provide a substantiation of this important assertion—probably because he considers it self-evident—but seems basically convinced that Theodore first discusses the 'passive formula' and then the 'baptismal formula'.[46] It is my opinion, however, that this is a misunderstanding of Theodore's line of thought. He first explains the passive character of the formula, by commenting on the phrase "So-and-so is baptised …".[47] Then, he expounds the importance of 'the name' and the relation between the one 'name' and the three divine persons.[48] In the latter part he also treats the invocational character of the formula and elaborates on the meaning of calling upon the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Of prime importance to the understanding of Theodore's way of reasoning is to note that his *presentation* of the formula is in full harmony with his *treatment* of it. So, Theodore mentions the beginning of the formula, "So-and-so is baptised", only while discussing its passive character. One time he gives the entire formula, another time only the first phrase "So-and-so is baptised". Especially the latter confirms that the mystagogue is explaining the different parts of the formula in a systematic way. Having discussed its passive character, Theodore drops the first part of the formula and successively concentrates on the remainder and

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42   Although the following will make clear that I reject Mazza's position, he is right that Theodore presents the formula as an invocation (see p. 313).

43   2,43:35 ff. (2,13 ff.); *s* 3,174:2 ff.

44   He considers it as an *Ordo* which Theodore comments on. As mentioned above (p. 14), however, it seems that the *synopses* are in fact later summaries of Theodore's text.

45   "Formula battesimale," 27.

46   Ibid., 30.

47   3,58:24–60:5 (3,14–15); *s* 3,191:14–193:3.

48   3,60:6–62:18 (3,15–18); *s* 3,193:3–195:17.

therefore only mentions "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". So, nothing in this part of Theodore's mystagogy indicates the existence of two separate rituals and two different formulas. The arbitrariness of supposing such a thing becomes all the more visible when we realise that the 'shorter formula' is also discussed in a passage which Mazza attributes to the (longer) passive formula.[49]

After his elucidation of the formula, Theodore describes the ritual itself:

> The priest places his hand on your head and says "*in the name* of the Father," and with these words he causes you to immerse yourself in water ... You, therefore, immerse and bow your head while the priest says "and of the Son," and causes you with his hand to immerse again in the same way. ... Then the priest says "and of the Holy Spirit" and likewise presses you down into the water ...[50]

It is true that this time the formula starts with "In the name" and lacks "So-and-so is baptised". But this is (again) satisfactorily explained by the context. Theodore clearly concentrates on the immersions here and, understandably, mentions only that part of the formula which directly relates to these acts, i.e. the invocation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Contrary to the introductory "So-and-so is baptised", these invocations coincide[51] with the immersions and so clarify the cause of the benefits bestowed upon the candidate through baptism.

A final issue needs to be addressed. Mazza rightly observes that Theodore mentions the imposition of the hand twice, the first time at the beginning of his explanation of the formula and the second time at the beginning of his description of the ritual itself.[52] Mazza seems to explain this 'unnecessary' repetition of the laying-on of the hand as a remnant of the earlier situation without the passive formula when the imposition of the hand directly preceded the immersions. As I am not convinced of the existence of two separate rituals, however, the reason for the repetition of the imposition of the hand must be sought in another direction. It is my impression that Theodore repeats the act the second time because of its importance. In a literal sense, the phrase "The priest places

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49   "Formula battesimale," 30.
50   3,62:19–63:11 (3,18–19); s 3,195:18–196:17.
51   The phrase underlying Mingana's "with these words", ܘܟܕ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܠܐ, can also be translated with "at the same time as the uttering of these words" or "while uttering these words" (Sokoloff, 1107b. Cf. *T&D*: "en même temps qu'il parle" and *BS*: "und sogleich mit dem Wort").
52   "Formula battesimale," 27.

his hand on your head and says 'in the name of the Father'" is not completely true since "So-and-so is baptised" is left out. But as we realise the importance of the imposition of the hand concerning the immersions, it is fully understandable that Theodore repeats it here and directly connects it to the name of the Father who causes the first immersion.

After all, then, there is no compelling reason to justify Mazza's claim that the immersion ritual was preceded by a separate ritual with a different formula. The *synopsis* induces the right impression: Theodore describes one and the same ritual with only one formula. After having said "So-and-so is baptised", the bishop continues with "in the name of the Father"—the first immersion occurs—, then he utters "and of the Son"—the second immersion occurs—, and finally "and of the Holy Spirit"—the third immersion occurs.[53] During all of this, the baptizand remains completely silent.[54]

After the third immersion, when the one baptism is complete, the neophyte goes out of the water[55] and receives the bright white baptismal garment (*tunica alba*).[56,57]

The whole rite of initiation comes to an end with the concluding signing on the forehead.[58] The bishop approaches the neophyte and signs him on his forehead with the words: "So-and-so is signed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit".

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53   This agrees with the ritual of John Chrysostom, as we will see below (p. 343).

54   "If you were allowed to speak at that time, you would have said: "Amen," … You are, however, not allowed to speak at the time of baptism, as it behoves you to receive the renewal through the mysteries, when you are baptised, in silence and fear …" (3,62:26–36 (3,18); *s* 3,195:23–196:6).

55   3,63:11 (3,19; *s* 3,196:17); 3,67:22–23 (3,25; *s* 201:15–16).

56   For a fuller treatment of liturgical vestments, see p. 219 f. and footnotes.

57   3,68:1–13 (3,26–27); *s* 3,201:26–202:11. Mingana has "When you go out (of the water) you wear a garment that is wholly radiant" and "After you have received the grace of baptism and worn a white garment that shines". The first sentence gives the impression that the neophyte received the garment while still in the water. However, Mingana's rendering is not very accurate here and the Syriac is better translated with: "When you have, then, gone up from there (ܡܢ ܬܡܢ ܟܕ ܣܠܩܬ ܡܢ ܗܟܝܠ), you put on (ܠܒܫܬ) a garment that is wholly radiant" and "After you have in this way received grace through baptism (ܟܕ ܗܟܝܠ ܒܗܢܐ ܙܢܐ ܛܝܒܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) and have put on (or: wear) (ܠܒܝܫ ܐܢܬ) a white garment that shines …". Cf. *T&D*: "Mais dès que tu es remonté de là, tu te revêts d'un vêtement tout entier éclatant … Ainsi, quand tu as reçu la grâce par le moyen du baptême, et que tu t'es revêtu d'un vêtement blanc resplendissant …" and *BS*: "Sobald du also von dort aufgestiegen bist, kleidest du dich in ein ganz und gar strahlendes Gewand … Sobald du die Gnade durch die Taufe empfangen hast und ein weißes, strahlendes Gewand trägst …".

58   3,68:12–69:2 (3,27); *s* 3,207:10–203:3. See p. 80 ff. for a discussion of the authenticity and character of this ritual.

7.1.2   *Function and Meaning of the Ritual*

Theodore approaches baptism basically in the Pauline sense of a remembrance *of* and a participation *in* Christ's death and resurrection:

> It is indeed evident to us, according to the words of the Apostle, that when we perform either baptism or the Eucharist we perform them in remembrance of the death and resurrection of Christ, in order that the hope of the latter may be strengthened in us. So far as the resurrection is concerned he said: "So many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus, were buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also shall walk in newness of life." He clearly taught here that we are baptised so that we might imitate in ourselves the death and resurrection of our Lord, and that we might receive from our remembrance of the happenings that took place the confirmation of our hope in future things.[59]
>
> Because Christ our Lord abolished the power of death by His own resurrection (the Apostle) said: "As many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death." As if one were saying: We know that death has been abolished a long time ago by Christ our Lord, and we draw nigh unto Him and are baptised with such a faith because we desire to participate in His death, in the hope of participating also in the resurrection from the dead, in the way in which He himself arose.[60]

The image of dying and rising with Christ not only offers a baptismal theology in general, but also functions as a mystagogical interpretation of the ritual in particular:[61]

> This is the reason why, when at my baptism I plunge my head I receive the death of Christ our Lord, and desire to have His burial, and because of this I firmly believe in the resurrection of our Lord; and when I rise from the water I think that I have symbolically risen a long time ago.[62]

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59   1,20:15–27 (1,6–7); *s* 1,147:20–148:6.
60   3,52:2–10 (3,5); *s* 3,183:22–184:2.
61   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 215–217, 281, 284 seems in principle to be right that a baptismal theology as such is not the same as a mystagogical interpretation of the ritual actions. The former offers a reflection on the meaning of baptism, while the latter puts meaning into the specific baptismal rituals. In the present context, however, it is clear that theology and mystagogy are closely connected.
62   3,52:10–15 (3,5); *s* 3,184:2–6.

... you have fulfilled by your baptism in water the rite of the burial, and you have received the sign of the resurrection by your rising out of the water ...[63]

Nevertheless, although acknowledging its fundamental truth, Theodore's emphasis is not so much on the submersion as a participation in Christ's death, but on the rising and then not primarily as a participation in Christ's historical resurrection, but as a type of the final resurrection of which Christ's historical resurrection is the model.[64] As Riley[65] puts it, Theodore shares with other fathers the idea of baptism as the *antitype* of Christ's resurrection, the *type*. But more importantly—and this is where he differs from others—he sees baptism as the *type* of the coming eschaton, the *antitype*. Theodore's focus and interest, then, is strongly eschatological.

In order to explain the relationship between the final resurrection and the baptismal ceremony, Theodore uses the image of *second birth* (ܡܘܠܕܐ ܬܪܝܢܐ). The whole idea of baptism as birth is very common in early Christianity[66] and is usually based upon John 3:1–8, a passage Theodore pays considerable attention to.[67] Commenting on verse 5, where Jesus says: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God", Theodore compares baptism to the carnal birth form a mother's 'womb'.[68] Like the human seed that falls into the mother's womb and is fashioned by God's hand into a living man, the baptismal candidate falls into the water of baptism as a seed into a womb and is completely changed into a new man. This change involves a transition "from a mortal into an immortal, from a corruptible into an incorruptible, and from a mutable into an immutable, nature".[69]

But how does this second birth relate to the resurrection? To make this connection, Theodore blends John 3 with his sacramental view.[70] According to the

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63   3,67:24–26 (3,25); *s* 3,201:17–18.
64   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 286–288; 325 ff.
65   Ibid., 328. Cf. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 76 ff.
66   The idea is already current in Tertullian (e.g. *On Baptism* 1.10, 20.5). See further below under 'Context'.
67   3,50:8–51:22 (3,3–4; *s* 3,181:21–183:9; note that Mingana overlooked the final portion of the Syriac of 3,3 and consequently did not translate the passage. For the exact phrase, see Gerber, *Nicänum*, 294 to which I am indebted for this observation.); 3,55:8 ff. (3,9 ff.; *s* 3,187:8 ff.). Cf. Theodore's commentary on the Gospel of John, 3:3–6, 3:12, 3:29 (Conti & Elowsky, *Gospel of John*, 31–33, 37).
68   Theodore employs both ܪܚܡܐ (*s* 182:3; 187:9; 187:12; 187:16) and ܥܘܒܐ (*s* 187:8; 187:14; 189:5).
69   3,55:26–28 (3,9); *s* 3,187:23–188:1.
70   Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 328–332.

latter, baptism, as a mystery (ܐܪܙܐ), is a symbol of the eschatological reality. So, concerning the change of the body into the likeness of the resurrection body of Christ, Theodore says: "This will take place in reality *at the resurrection*,[71] but we perform its symbols and its signs in baptism".[72] This does not mean that baptism is 'just a symbol' and only *points* to future reality. Baptism mediates a present participation in the coming life of the resurrection.[73] To elucidate this relation between present and future, Theodore uses the classic concept of potency and actuality and illustrates this with the example of a baby:

> And inasmuch as the one who is born of a woman has potentially in him the faculty of speaking, hearing, walking and working with his hands, but is very weak to perform all these acts in reality till the time in which God has decreed for him to perform them, so also in the case here in connection with the one who is born of baptism. This one has indeed in him and possesses potentially all the faculties of an immortal and incorruptible nature, but is not now in a position to make use of them and put them into a complete and perfect act of incorruptibility, immortality, impassibility and immutability. He who receives through baptism the potential faculty of performing all these acts, will receive the power of performing them in reality at the time when he is no more a natural but a spiritual man, and when the working of the (Holy) Spirit renders the body incorruptible and the soul immutable …[74]

This important passage for understanding Theodore's 'sacramental eschatology'[75] makes clear that by the mystery of baptism man already receives the potency of the resurrection life, which becomes fully actualised in the eschaton.[76] It is within this paradigm that Theodore further interprets the new birth

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71   Mingana renders "in heaven", but the Syriac reads ܒܩܝܡܬܐ. Cf. *T&D*: "à la résurrection"; *BS*: "bei der Auferstehung".

72   3,65:9–10 (3,22); *S* 3,199:1–2.

73   Riley, 326; cf. Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 79, Bruns, *Himmel*, 334–337, and, more elaborately, McLeod, *Christological Ramifications*, esp. 65 ff.

74   3,55:31–56:9 (3,10); *S* 3,188:3–16. Elsewhere, Theodore compares baptism to the 'birth' of human semen from the man and the resurrection with the following birth of the child from the woman (3,69:8–27 (3,28); *S* 3,203:9–25).

75   A term borrowed from Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 329.

76   Behind all this lies Theodore's theology of the two *katastases* ('ages' or 'dispensations') (cf. Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 29–34). The first, and present, age is characterised by mutability, mortality, and sin; the second, and coming, age by immutability, immor-

of John 3: "He [Jesus, NW] called baptism a second birth because it contains the *symbol* of the second birth, and because through baptism we participate *as in symbol* in this second birth. Indeed, we receive from baptism participation in this second birth without any question and doubt".[77] As baptism is a *symbol* of the coming reality,[78] baptism can only be a 'second birth' in the sense that it is a symbol of the real second birth at the resurrection: "You should proceed towards baptism in which the symbols of this second birth are performed, because you will in reality receive the true second birth only after you have risen from the dead ...".[79] Having incorporated the idea of second birth into his sacramental view, Theodore has availed himself of the means to express the (nature of the) relation between baptism and resurrection. In this way,

> Theodore's use of the image of second birth ... will constantly hover between second birth, in which is understood the event which will transpire at the baptizand's resurrection from the dead, and second birth, in which is understood the symbolic explanation of the potentialities which the act of baptism here and now, related to the actual past resurrection of Christ and really related to the future second birth in hope, actually contains.[80]

It may not come as a surprise that Theodore most frequently associates or even identifies baptism with '(second) birth'.[81] And he further extends the image when he pictures his teaching about second birth as 'swaddling clothes'[82] and the Eucharist as the food of infants.[83]

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tality, and perfection. These radically different dispensations are (only) bridged by the mystery of baptism, without, however, shifting emphasis from the future to the present. Although the believer already participates in the coming age 'in symbol', the final resurrection remains the decisive starting point of the second age.

77   3,51:18–22 (3,4); *s* 3,183:7–9 (italics mine).

78   Cf. 3,57:28 (3,12; *s* 3,190:10); 3,57:33–58:3 (3,12; *s* 3,190:15–20); 3,65:9–10 (3,22; *s* 3,199:1–2); 3,65:20–21 (3,22; *s* 3,11–12); 3,69:3–6 (3,28; *s* 3,203:4–7).

79   3,49:28–31 (3,2); *s* 3,5–9.

80   Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 327.

81   See e.g. 3,60:16 (3,15; *s* 3,193:11); 3,62:2 (3,17; *s* 3,195:4); 3,64:4 (3,20; *s* 3,197:18); 3,64:35 (3,21; *s* 3,198:19); 3,67:24 (3,25; *s* 3,201:14–15); 3,69:3 (3,28; *s* 3,203:4); XV,74:20 (XV,8; *s* XV,209:18–19); XV,78:25 (XV,14; *s* XV,214:8–9); XVI,108:33 (XVI,22; *s* XVI,248:20). Sometimes he combines 'birth' with the death of Christ: "As we receive birth of baptism in the death of Christ our Lord" (XV,73:27–28 (XV,6); *s* XV,208:21–22); "Indeed, it behoves us who have received a sacramental birth in the death of Christ our Lord ..." (XV,73:34–74:1 (XV,6); *s* XV,209:2–3).

82   3,69:36 (3,29; *s* 3,204:7–8); XV,71:10–20 (XV,1; *s* XV,205:20–206:7).

83   E.g. 3,69:28–30 (3,29); *s* 3,204:1–3.

Alongside the image of rebirth, Theodore employs the closely-related image of re-creation. Or more precisely: Theodore portrays rebirth as re-creation by using the image of a potter, based on Jeremiah 18:1–10, and applying it to baptism.[84] Man is compared to a vessel of clay, which has been distorted by sin, and, as a consequence, "received a complete dissolution (ܫܪܝܐ)[85] from the (Divine) sentence of death".[86] The latter—when interpreted after the current image of clay and water—portrays the miserable state of mankind as an earthen vessel which has been dissolved in water. Yet, as the potter's vessel is refashioned with water, so man is reshaped by the water of baptism. But Theodore draws the parallel even further, beyond the picture of Jeremiah 18. After having been remodelled by the potter, the vessel is baked in a kiln (ܐܬܘܢܐ). Only then is the renewal complete, definite, and irreversible. Similarly, man's transformation is definite only after having been hardened by the Holy Spirit in the oven of baptism. This time, the water of baptism is likened to a kiln and the Holy Spirit to fire. So, in a creative way, Theodore employs the whole process of the fabrication of a vessel and superimposes the image of baking on the image of remodelling, depicting the water of baptism as both a kiln and the water needed to shape the clay.

According to Riley,[87] Theodore uses still another image. The relevant passage here is:

> It behoves you, therefore, to think that you are going into the water as into a furnace, where you will be renewed and refashioned in order that you may move to a higher nature, after having cast away your old mortality and fully assumed an immortal and incorruptible nature. These things with birth happen to you in the water because you were fashioned at the beginning from earth and water, and having fallen later into sin you assumed a thorough corruption through the sentence of death.[88]

In the first part of the passage, Riley recognises the image of a forge, a furnace in which metals are heated, melted, and shaped. Together with the image of

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84   3,57:7–58:11 (3,11–13); S 3,189:17–191:2.
85   With a play on words, Theodore mentions a few lines later that the Lord "dissolved (ܫܪܐ) death by resurrection" (3,57:21–22 (3,11); S 3,190:4). Mingana renders 'abolished' (cf. *T&D*: 'abolit') here, but within the present context, it seems justified to retain the image of dissolution in water and render ܫܪܐ in a similar way as the earlier ܫܪܝܐ (so also *BS*: "Auflösung … auflöste").
86   3,57:18–19 (3,11); S 3,190:2–3.
87   *Christian Initiation*, 284–285.
88   3,56:34–57:6 (3,11); S 3,189:11–17.

earth and water, Theodore would explain here, then, that "entering the pool … is the sign of dissolution and death"[89] and man returns to his original elements. Indeed, as mentioned above, Theodore seems to use the image of a dissolution in water. And it is also true that the image of metallurgy is attested in the Syrian tradition.[90] Nevertheless, I am not convinced that Theodore has the idea of melting metals in mind here. Firstly, although it is not impossible for a mystagogue to combine different images, nothing in the text supports the idea of melting metals. This fully hinges upon the interpretation of ܟܘܪܐ itself. Secondly, Theodore does not seem to use the image of the water as a forge elsewhere, which would make it an isolated thought here. Thirdly, it is important to note that the passage under consideration directly precedes Theodore's account of the potter. In fact, as the latter fluently continues the train of thought of the former, both are most likely part of the same textual unit.[91] From the larger context, therefore, it seems more likely that ܟܘܪܐ refers to the same image in both instances, viz. a kiln. The passage under consideration, then, does not describe a different image, but introduces the following account of the potter. By the reference to the kiln, the passage already anticipates the final transformation to a higher nature effectuated by the fire of the Holy Spirit, which is more fully discussed at the end of the account.

To achieve rebirth and re-creation, the operation of the Holy Spirit is essential. For this reason, before all else, the bishop consecrates the water and prays

> that the grace of the Holy Spirit come upon the water and prepare it with His holy and awe-inspiring presence for the task of performing all these things, so that it may become a reverential womb for the second birth, and so that those who descend into it may be fashioned afresh by the grace of the Holy Spirit and born again into a new and virtuous human nature.[92]

Only when the water has been prepared by the Spirit and has received its power,[93] has it truly become "a womb to the sacramental birth".[94]

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89   *Christian Initiation*, 285.
90   Narsai employs the image several times (see p. 322). Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 105–106.
91   Cf *T&D* and *BS*. Mingana, however, distributes the textual unit over two paragraphs. Riley's idea was possibly inspired by Mingana's division.
92   3,56:24–30 (3,10); *s* 3,189:3–7. Cf. 3,54:32–55:7 (3,8–9); *s* 3,186:3–187:8.
93   3,56:31–32 (3,10); *s* 3,189:8–9.
94   3,55:6–7 (3,9); *s* 3,187:8.

By the action of the Holy Spirit, man is completely renewed.[95] But as the real birth happens only at the resurrection, a tension remains between the symbolic renewal through baptism and its final realisation which still lies ahead. Here we come across the relation between potency and actuality mentioned before. The baptised person "has indeed in him and possesses potentially all the faculties of an immortal and incorruptible nature", which he will be able to actualise "at the time when he is no more a natural but a spiritual man, and when the working of the (Holy) Spirit renders the body incorruptible and the soul immutable".[96] It is clear, then, that the transforming operation of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the ritual of baptism or the present life, but extends beyond death to the resurrection and in this way bridges present and future.

Another way Theodore clarifies the relation between the present and future work of the Spirit is by the Pauline notions of 'firstfruits of the Spirit' (τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος/ܪܘܚܐ ܕܪܫܝܬ) and the Spirit as an earnest (ἀρρα-βὼν/ܪܗܒܘܢܐ).[97] In the latter sense, the gift of the Spirit guarantees the believer's share in the inheritance of the future benefits (Eph. 1:13–14; 2 Cor. 1:21–22). The notion of 'firstfruits of the Spirit' is found in Rom. 8:23: "And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." The West-Syrian expositor draws two important conclusions from this text.[98] Firstly, he maintains that Paul's use of 'firstfruits of the Spirit' implies that the believers shall receive "all the grace" with the reality of the resurrection. Secondly, the expressed expectation of the coming "adoption of sons" would indicate that in the here and now "we only receive the symbol of the adoption of children", but that at the resurrection "we shall receive the real adoption". Referring to Rom. 8:14, Theodore points out that the Spirit and adoptive sonship are closely related: "The true adoption of children is, therefore, that which is conferred by the Holy Spirit".[99] The important idea of 'adoption' will again draw our attention in the discussion of the baptismal formula below.

The 'firstfruits of the Spirit'—also denoted as 'the gift of the Spirit' (ܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ),[100] 'the grace of the Holy Spirit' (ܛܝܒܘܬܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ

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95   3,55:8–30 (3,9); s 3,187:8–188:2.
96   3,55:36–56:9 (3,10); s 3,188:7–16.
97   3,53:2–54:2 (3,6–7); s 3,184:24–185:24.
98   3,53:16–31 (3,7); s 3,185:9–20.
99   3,67:16–18 (3,25); s 3,201:12.
100   See the quotation below.

ܐܘܚܕܢܐ),[101] or simply 'the Holy Spirit'[102]—is bestowed on the baptismal candidate in baptism:[103]

> The power of the holy baptism consists in this: ... it informs you with the gift of the Holy Spirit the firstfruits of whom you receive when you are baptised.[104]

> ... while it belonged to our Lord to confer the Spirit, whom He conferred now upon us in baptism as the firstfruits ... (ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܡܪܢ ܫܠܝܛ ܗܘ ܕܢܬܠ ܪܘܚܐ ܗܘ ܕܗܫܐ ܠܢ ܝܗܒܗ).[105]

As established before,[106] the post-baptismal signing chiefly *confirms* the reception of (the firstfruits of) the Spirit, which is particularly connected to the water bath. Although Theodore justifies the post-baptismal ritual by appealing to the pattern of the baptism of Jesus,[107] it is clear that in his rite the conferring of the Spirit is still ritually associated with the immersions.[108]

Albeit that Theodore portrays the Spirit as the special agent, discussing the baptismal formula he painstakingly emphasises that baptism is a work of the

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101   E.g. 3,53:4 (3,6; *s* 3, 184:25); 3,58:10 (3,13; *s* 3,191:1); 3,68:16–17 (3,27; *s* 3,202:13) (concerning Christ). Theodore also combines the terms, e.g. in: "... we receive at present, in form of an earnest, the firstfruits of the grace of the Holy Spirit ..." (xv,72:3–5 (xv,3; *s* 3,206:19–20).

102   "... that the Holy Spirit descended on you also (ܐܦ ܥܠܝܟ ܐܬܬ ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ), and you were anointed and received grace; and He will be and remain with you, as it is through Him that you possess now the firstfruits." (3,68:29–31 (3,27); *s* 3,202:23–25).

103   3,66:11–15 (3,23); *s* 3,200:5–8.

104   ܚܝܠܐ ܠܟ ܓܝܪ ܡܗܒܐܬ ܒܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܕܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܪܫܝܬܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܗܘ ܡܩܒܠ ܐܢܬ ܡܐ ܕܥܡܕ ܐܢܬ (3,53:31–54:2 (3,7); *s* 3,185:23–24). *T&D*: "... il te fait, par le don de l'Esprit-Saint, en recevoir les prémices quand tu es baptisé". *BS*: "... gibt er dir durch die Gabe des Heiligen Geistes Teil an seiner Erstlingsgabe, sobald du getauft wirst". Cf. Theodore's remark with reference to the Eucharist: "This is the reason why only the baptised ones partake of it, those who have received the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit in the second birth of baptism, and have been found worthy to receive holiness therefrom" (xvi,108:31–34 (xvi,22); *s* xvi,248:19–21).

105   3,66:11–13 (3,23); *s* 3,200:5–6. *T&D*: "... de donner l'Esprit, dont maintenant il nous donne les prémices dans le baptême ..." *BS*: "Unser Herr aber hat die Macht den Geist zu geben, dessen Erstlingsgabe er uns jetzt schon in der Taufe gegeben hat ...".

106   See p. 81–82.

107   3,68:12–25 (3,27); *s* 3,202:10–20.

108   In his second homily on the Eucharist, Theodore explains that if one persists in a specific sin, the Holy Spirit leaves, but returns after repentance (xvi,121:34–122:2 (xvi,42); *s* xvi,263:16–20).

Trinity as a whole. Both the passive "So-and-so is baptised"[109] and the Trinitarian character of the formula[110] indicate that the Trinity is the cause of the benefits of baptism. Theodore explains the causative nature of the formula by comparing it with the healing of the lame man in Acts 3:6. As Peter's words "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth[111] rise up and walk" indicate Christ as the cause of the healing,

> ... so also the (priest) who says: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" refers to them as the cause of the benefits conferred upon us in baptism, and implies that it is *by them* that our renewal is accomplished, *by them* the second birth is granted to us, *by them* we are fashioned into immortal, incorruptible, impassible and immutable men, and *by them* we cast away the old servitude and receive the freedom which involves complete abolition of tribulations, and delight in the eternal and ineffable benefits.[112]

Theodore points out that the formula speaks of the singular 'name' and not the plural 'names', indicating that it is rightly understood as an invocation of the one eternal nature of the Trinity.[113] So, there are not three causes, but only one with "one will, one power and one action".[114] And although each of the three persons is able to confer the benefits of baptism, the ritual is only complete "when the call upon the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit is finished".[115] All this Theodore sees reflected in the performance of the ritual: the three identical immersions show the equality of the three persons,[116] whereas the fact that the neophyte leaves the pool once demonstrates "that baptism is one, and one

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109   3,59:27–60:5 (3,15; *s* 3,192:19–193:3); 3,58:33–35 (3,14; *s* 3,191:20–22). Cf. the discussion of the passive formula concerning the signing (p. 228).

110   3,60:6 ff. (3,15 ff.); *s* 3,193:3 ff.

111   Theodore's reading. The Biblical text has "Jesus Christ the Nazarene".

112   3,60:12–21 (3,15); *s* 3,193:7–15. My italics. Cf.: "In this same way the sentence: 'in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' reveals the giver of the benefits of baptism which are: second birth, renewal, immortality, incorruptibility, impassibility, immutability, deliverance from death and servitude and all evils, happiness of freedom, and participation in the ineffable good things which we are expecting. The person who is baptised is baptised for these things. The call upon the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is, therefore, used for the purpose of knowing from whom the benefits of baptism are expected" (3,62:9–18 (3,17); *s* 3,195:9–17).

113   3,61:5–23(3,16); *s* 3,194:4–19.

114   3,64:34–35 (3,21); *s* 3,198:18–19.

115   3,63:35–36 (3,20); *s* 3,197:13–15.

116   3,63:22–28 (3,20); *s* 3,197:1–7.

also the grace which is accomplished in it by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who are never separated from one another as they are one nature".[117] The bowing of the head at each immersion indicates that the candidate expects to receive the benefits from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit respectively.[118]

Theodore justifies the Trinitarian character of baptism in a twofold way. Firstly, by appealing to Christ's command in Matthew 28:19: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".[119] Secondly, by referring to the character of Jesus' own baptism, in which all three, Father, Son, and Spirit, are involved. The important presupposition here is that the baptism of Jesus functions as the model for Christian baptism.[120] Therefore, Theodore instructs his audience, "you are baptised in the same baptism as that in which Christ our Lord in the flesh was baptised, and this is the reason why you are baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit".[121] Yet, not only the formula as such, but also its meaning is rooted in the baptism of Jesus. Theodore holds the opinion that the baptism of the man Jesus is all about adoptive sonship, realised by the mutual involvement of Father, Son, and Spirit. This he sees reflected in the baptismal ritual:

> When, therefore, the priest says "in the name of the Father" remember the sentence "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and think of the adoption of children[122] which is conferred upon you by the Father; and when he says "and of the Son" think of the One[123] who was

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117   3,63:29–31 (3,20); *s* 3,197:7–10.
118   3,62:23–63:11 (3,18–19); *s* 3,195:21–196:17.
119   3,59:3–11 (3,14); *s* 3,191:23–192:5.
120   Cf. VI,69:34–35 (VI,11); *s* VI,182:18–20.
121   3,66:16–19 (3,24); *s* 3,200:8–10.
122   Syriac: ܣܝܡܬ ܒܢܝܐ = adoption of sons (Sokoloff, 1005a). Throughout his translation of the sixteen catechetical homilies, Mingana renders this phrase with both 'adoption of sons' (see e.g. I,39:7 (I,9); I,67:34 (I,9); I,24:5 (I,12)) and 'adoption of children' (see quote and e.g. 3,64:19–20 (3,21); 3,66:23 ff. (3,24)). It is noteworthy that before 3,53:19 (3,7) Mingana always translates with 'adoption of sons' while from 3,53:19 (3,7) onwards he consistently renders 'adoption of children'. The reason for this shift remains unclear.
123   I.e. God the Son. Theodore sharply distinguishes between the eternal Son and the man Jesus. Their relationship "is expressed in the usually careful way that he refers not to Jesus as such but to the *homo assumptus* (the assumed man) and to the Word as the *Verbum assumens* (the assuming Word). He did this, so it seems, to avoid the impression that the two complete natures or their equivalents, the Word and the 'man', can be conceived as two individuals acting freely in separate ways from one another. The 'man' is always from the beginning of conception the one who has been assumed, and the Word is the One who has assumed 'him' and his nature" (McLeod, "Theodore of Mopsuestia Revisited,"

near the One who was baptised,[124] and understand that He became to you
the cause of the adoption of children; and when he says "and of the Holy
Spirit" think of the One who descended like a dove and lighted upon Him,
and expect from Him the confirmation of the adoption of children.[125]

Directly following this passage, Theodore quotes Rom. 8:14, "For as many as are
led by the Spirit of God, they are children of God" and (again) underlines that
the Spirit is the special agent for the realisation of adoptive sonship. In his pre-
ceding treatment of the Lord's Prayer in homily XI, Theodore referred to the
next verse of Rom. 8, verse 15, in a passage which is worth quoting here:

> As to you, you have received[126] through Me the grace of the Holy Spirit
> whereby you have obtained adoption of sons and παρρησία to call God,
> Father. You have not received the Spirit in order to be again in servi-
> tude and fear but to be worthy of the Spirit of adoption of sons through
> which you call God, Father, with confidence. From this you have obtained
> conversation in Jerusalem which is above and have been worthy of that
> life of freedom which will be the lot of those who, in the resurrection,
> will become immortal and immutable, and will live in heaven in such a
> nature.[127]

Of special importance here is the fact that adoption includes παρρησία (free-
dom/opennes towards God) and—following Rom. 8:15—removes servitude
and fear (ܪ̈ܚܠܬܐ).[128] The believer is put into a new relationship with God and
has received the privilege to approach Him as Father. Nevertheless, Theodore

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453–454). On Theodore's Christology, see also Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 48–65 and
Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 40–52.

124   I.e. the man Jesus (see former footnote).
125   3,67:6–15 (3,25); s 3,201:4–10.
126   ܢܣܒܬܘܢ. Although said before baptism, Theodore speaks here as if they have already
      been baptised.
127   XI,6:27–7:2 (XI,7); s XI,131:2–9.
128   We already remarked that in his mystagogy Theodore disconnects παρρησία from the Holy
      Spirit and sonship (p. 242). Concerning the signing on the forehead, the concept of παρ-
      ρησία is of special importance, but is completely neglected with reference to baptism. The
      opposite is true for the Holy Spirit and sonship. Nevertheless, the quotation above clearly
      indicates that, theologically, the Holy Spirit, sonship, and παρρησία are strongly connected.
      This reveals that mystagogy—giving meaning to rituals—is not the same as theology. The
      former is based upon the latter, but is ultimately shaped by one's understanding of what
      happens in the ritual. As a consequence, what is theologically connected may become
      dislocated in one's mystagogy.

portrays the mystery of baptism as 'awe-inspiring' (ܕܚܝܠ)[129] and speaks of the "holy and awe-inspiring (ܕܚܝܠܬܐ) presence" of the Holy Spirit in the water,[130] an "awe-inspiring (ܕܚܝܠܐ) salvation",[131] the neophyte as an "awe-inspiring (ܕܚܝܠ) child",[132] and the "real and awe-inspiring (ܕܚܝܠ) birth of the resurrection".[133] Similarly, the candidate is not allowed to speak during the immersions, but has to receive his renewal "in silence and *awe* (ܕܚܝܠܬܐ)".[134] On the one hand, then, the restored relationship with the Creator removes 'fear' in the negative sense of uncertainty. But on the other hand, God's work of salvation is holy and awe-inspiring.[135] It is so marvellous that it induces awe and reverence in the observer. That this 'awe' is definitely the opposite of 'fear' in the negative sense, becomes clear when Theodore takes the awe-inspiring character of the mystery as the foundation for the certainty of the future blessings.[136]

After baptism, the newborn Christian rises from the water, in which act Theodore sees a sign (ܐܬܐ) of the resurrection.[137] Next, the neophyte receives the white baptismal garment, the *tunica alba*.[138] This vesting is the ritual counterpart of the disrobing preceding the full body anointing. As the old apparel symbolised mortality, the bright and shining character of the baptismal robe "denotes the next world which is shining and radiant".[139] It is interesting to note, however, that Theodore himself makes no effort whatsoever to make this connection, possibly because the relation is obvious. But it is worth noting that Theodore primarily considers not the post-baptismal robing, but the whole body anointing as the counterpart of the (directly preceding) disrobing: "After you have taken off the covering which involves the sign of mortality, you receive through your anointing the sign of the covering of immortality,[140] which you

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129   3,50:6 (3,2); *s* 3,181:18 and 3,52:36 (3,6); *s* 3,184:22.

130   3,56:26 (3,10); *s* 3,189:4.

131   3,56:34 (3,10); *s* 3,189:10.

132   3,55:6 (3,9); *s* 3,187:8.

133   3,69:5–6 (3,28); *s* 3,203:6.

134   3,62:36 (3,18); *s* 3,196:5. Mingana renders 'fear', but 'awe' seems more appropriate here. Cf. *T&D*: "crainte"; *BS*: "Ehrfurcht".

135   The root ܕܚܠ (and derivatives) can have both meanings (Payne Smith, 88b–89a).

136   3,50:6 (3,2); *s* 3,181:18 and 3,52:36 (3,6); *s* 3,184:22.

137   3,67:25–26; *s* 3,201:17–18.

138   For the whiteness of the garment, see p. 219 f. and footnotes. See also Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 434–437 and Curtin, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 332–339 for a discussion of the baptismal robe in Theodore, and Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 49–53 for a general discussion on the baptismal garment.

139   3,68:1–3 (3,26); *s* 3,202:1–2.

140   Cf. 1 Cor. 15:53. The image refers to the 'robe of glory', see n189 below.

expect to receive through baptism".[141] The way Theodore interprets the baptismal garment nicely illustrates the 'already but not yet' of his sacramental symbolism. The wearing of the white garment shows the neophyte's new status in Christ. Yet, as one is currently still "in need of garments", the covering with the real immortality is still to come.[142]

7.2   Narsai of Nisibis

7.2.1   *Description and Discussion of the Rituals*

Since there is no full body anointing, baptism directly follows the signing on the forehead. Narsai does not say anything about the physical space of baptism, apart from his mentioning of a 'vat' (ܩܘܠܬܐ)[143] in "the vat of water"[144] and "the vat of Baptism".[145] Although baptism undoubtedly occurred in the inner room of the baptistery, Narsai is completely silent on this.

In preparation of the ritual which is both the centre and the apex of initiation, the bishop first consecrates the water:

> With the name of the Divinity, the three Names, he consecrates (ܡܩܕܫ)
> the water, that it may suffice to accomplish the cleansing of the defiled.
> The defilement of men he cleanses with water: yet not by the water, but
> by the power of the name of the Divinity which there lights down. The
> power of the Divinity dwells in the visible waters, and by the force of His
> power they dissolve the might of the Evil One and of Death.[146]

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141   3,54:13–16 (3,8); *s* 3,186:7–10. In agreement with the custom of the day, it is likely that the everyday clothing which the candidates had taken off was made of wool, while the white baptismal garment was fabricated of linen (cf. p. 219 f. and footnotes). Quasten, "Pythagorean Idea" argues that, especially within a religious context, wool and linen already had symbolic value already since antiquity. Wool stems from mortal animals and was therefore associated with death, while linen was made of plants and was associated with purity, life, and immortality.

142   3,68:4–8 (3,26); *s* 3,202:3–7.

143   Interestingly, ܩܘܠܬܐ can also mean 'coffin' or 'sarcophagus' (Sokoloff, 357b). Since Narsai interprets baptism also as a burial, the choice of the term may not be coincidental. This double meaning is not exploited by Narsai though, and the term occurs only twice.

144   21,344:2; *s* :1.

145   21,349:14; *s* :8.

146   21,345:24–30; *s* :14–18. The longer passage 21,342:1–345:30; *s* 342:1–345:18 contains several references and allusions to the consecration of the water, such as: "Come, let us examine exactly the mystery of our renewal; and let us learn concerning the power that is hidden in the visible waters", "The priest is like a pen to the hidden Power; and in Its hand he writes

Narsai is rather reticent on the actual performance of the consecration. We can be fairly certain, though, that it was Trinitarian, as he utters: "With the name of the Divinity, the three Names, he consecrates the water …". At the same time, it seems reasonable to suggest that the blessing also concerned the Spirit, the special Agent of the Trinity. Not only is the Spirit explicitly connected with the water (and the oil)[147] as such, but several passages also associate the Spirit with the consecration of it: "Let us hearken how the power of the Spirit speaks with it (the priesthood) and teaches it to bestow power upon common water",[148] and "O writer, that writes the Spirit upon a weak tablet …",[149] and again: "The drug of the Spirit he casts into the water, as into a furnace …".[150] Discussing the Eucharist, Narsai clarifies that the Spirit does not come down "in (His) nature" (as He "does not move about"), but that "it is the power from Him that comes down and works and accomplishes all".[151] It seems likely that the ritual was not witnessed by the candidates.

Narsai gives much heed to the bishop's apparel in which he appears after the blessing of the water:

> With fair garments he covers his body outwardly, and the raiment of the Spirit adorns his soul within. Completely adorned he stands before the beholders, that by his adornment he may reveal to men concerning the things that are about to be (done). He becomes as a mirror to the eyes of his fellow-servants, that they may look upon him and conceive the hope of being glorified. A mark he sets before their eyes by the garments that are upon him, that they may be aiming to be adorned spiritually. This he teaches by the adornment that is upon his limbs: that the mystery which is (administered) by his hands clothes with glory him that approaches it.[152]

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the three names over the water. O writer, that writes the Spirit upon a weak tablet, and the ink of his words is not effaced by the liquid waters!" and "With words of spirit his mouth converses with the dumb (elements), and they receive power to give life to that which is rational".

147　"The furnace of the waters His purpose prepared mystically; and instead of fire He has heated it with the Spirit of the power of His will" (22,364:27–29; *s* :16–17); "and then he lays on the drug of the Spirit with the symbol of the water" (22,366:12–13; *s* :7–8); "Cunningly He mixed the colours for the renewal of our race, with oil and water and the invincible power of the Spirit" (21,341:9–11; *s* :6–7).

148　21,342:19–20; *s* :11–12.

149　21,342:26–27; *s* :16–17.

150　21,343:37–38; *s* :23.

151　21,353:16–18; *s* :9–10.

152　21,344:4–14; *s* :2–9.

Dressed in his liturgical vestment, the bishop commences the final stage of the baptismal liturgy:

> Of the name of the Divinity he makes mention, and he says three times: 'Father and Son and Holy Spirit, one equality.' The names he repeats with the voice openly, and thus he says: 'Such a one is baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Spirit.' ... In their name he that is baptized is baptized (and buried) as in a tomb; and they call and raise him up from his death. ...
>
> Three times he bows his head at Their names, that he may learn the relation—that while They are One They are Three. With a mystery of our Redeemer he goes into the bosom of the font (lit. 'of baptism') after the manner of those three days in the midst of the tomb. Three days was our Redeemer with the dead: so also he that is baptized:—the three times are three days. ...
>
> As a babe from the midst of the womb he looks forth from the water; and instead of garments the priest receives and embraces him. He resembles a babe when he is lifted up from the midst of the water; and as a babe every one embraces and kisses him. Instead of swaddling-clothes they cast garments upon his limbs ... By the beauty of his garments he proclaims the beauty that is to be ...[153]

The whole is introduced by a threefold invocation of the Trinity, which clearly has an anti-heretical focus. Then, the bishop baptises the candidate by immersing him three times, while he recites the passive formula: "Such a one is baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Spirit" (ܦܠܢ ܥܡܕ ܒܫܡ ܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ). As the initiand "bows (ܟܦ݂ܢ) his head at their names (ܒܫܡܗܘܢ)", it seems that each immersion is accompanied with the invocation of one of the names of the Trinity.

Although Narsai does not explicate whether baptism was performed by affusion or full immersion, we may make an educated guess. First of all, in anticipation of the subsequent discussion of Narsai's mystagogy of the ritual, it is important to note that, although Narsai's preferred image is that of creation/birth, when discussing the ritual itself he employs only the image of dying/rising (Rom. 6). The three times the catechumen bends his head are compared to the three days Jesus remained in the grave. As Christ remained "in the midst (ܓܘ) of the tomb", the candidate "goes into the bosom (ܥܘܒܐ) of the font

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(lit. 'of baptism')". Furthermore, the baptised neophyte is described "[a]s a babe from the midst (ܡܢ ܓܘ) of the womb" who "looks forth (ܚܕܝܪ)[154] from the water". "He resembles a babe when he is lifted up from the midst (ܡܢ ܓܘ) of the water". Comparisons like these seem to make the most sense in the case of full immersion. The idea would then be that—similar to Theodore's rite—the initiand was sitting or kneeling and fully submerged himself by bowing his head.

Having emerged from the font, the new-born Christian is embraced and kissed by the bishop and other witnesses (priests, deacons, sponsor?). Only after that is he vested with beautiful 'garments' (ܢܚܬܐ). The plural ܢܚܬܐ may indicate that the neophyte is robed with an undergarment and an outer garment. In that case, he was probably baptised stark naked. It is noteworthy, however, that Narsai does not spend a word on a disrobing before the bath. We have seen earlier that the candidate experienced the *apotaxis* and following rituals 'naked', i.e. without his outer garment.[155] This attention to ritual nakedness elsewhere makes it all the more remarkable that this is completely absent concerning baptism itself.

Except for its 'beauty' (ܫܘܦܪܐ), Narsai does not elaborate on the physical attributes of the baptismal garment. On one occasion, however, he might be reflecting on its appearance:

> A beauteous colour they [the neophytes, NW] acquire on a sudden from the midst of the water; and more than the sun burns the light of their minds. Beams of light come into the world through the light that is in them, and the world is illumined with the beauteous rays of their conduct.[156]

If this poetic image indeed mirrors the design of the baptismal robe, the picture of the sun, light, and illumination may tell us that the garment is (basically) white. The term (ܓܘܢܐ), rendered as 'colour' by Connolly, does not necessarily contradict this idea since ܓܘܢܐ may also have the meaning of 'appearance'.[157] When Narsai clearly speaks of (various) colours, he employs the word ܨܒܥܐ ('pigment', 'colour', 'dye').[158]

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154   Or 'appears' (Payne Smith, 87b).
155   See p. 183 f. and p. 295–296.
156   21,349:38–350:2; *s* 349:23–350:1.
157   Payne Smith, 65a.
158   22,356:7 (*s* :5); 21,341:9 (*s* :6); 21,341:10 (*s* :6). Cf. Payne Smith, 379b; Sokoloff, 1016b.

A concluding remark on the duration of the ceremony: Narsai states that

> *within an hour* (ܫܥܐ ܚܕܐ)[159] should be accomplished the period of conception and birth. Outside the order that is set in nature does its order proceed; and it is not trammelled with a growth that is gradual. Come, O hearer, listen to the wonder of the new birth, the conception whereof and the bringing forth are accomplished *in one hour* (ܚܕܐ ܫܥܐ).[160]

What is meant by this "conception and birth" which are accomplished "within an hour"? The following excerpt—taken from a larger passage dealing mainly with the consecration of the water—may shed some light on this:

> As a seed he casts his word into the bosom of the waters; and they conceive and bring forth a new, unwonted birth. With words of spirit his mouth converses with the dumb (elements), and they receive power to give life to that which is rational. The dumb (elements) hear a new utterance from rational beings, like that utterance which Mary heard from Gabriel.[161]

Here we have the same picture of conception and birth. The consecration is compared to a conception; by the words spoken the water receives the power to bring forth new life, which is realised by baptism, the birth of new creatures. It is my impression, therefore, that the indicated period of an hour refers to the whole of the blessing of the water and baptism.

7.2.2 *Function and Meaning of the Ritual*

Throughout his two liturgical homilies, Narsai interprets baptism basically as re-creation, a renewing of man's image.[162] Man is cleansed from his defilement[163] and 'iniquity' (ܥܘܠܐ), and delivered from his 'mortality' (ܡܝܘܬܘܬܐ):

> He created a second time the creation which He had created in the beginning; and He purged out from it the old things of mortality. The rust of

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159 Although ܫܥܐ may also mean 'moment' (Payne Smith, 588a), 'hour' seems to better fit the context here (see below).

160 21,341:25–342:6; *s* 341:16–342:4. My italics.

161 21,345:8–14; *s* :4–8.

162 22,356:1 ff.

163 21,345:25–27; *s* :15.

iniquity He willed to wipe away from mortals; and His purpose put the
sponge of the Spirit into the hands of our body.[164]

Narsai portrays God the Creator as an Artist, a Painter, who "mixed[165] the
colours for the renewal of our race; with oil and water and the invincible power
of the Spirit"[166] and "paints an image upon the tablet of the waters".[167]

Using the image from metallurgy, he also likes to picture the baptismal font
as a furnace (ܟܘܪܐ) in which man is delivered from the rust of iniquity by the
heat of the Spirit and transformed into a higher nature:

> As in a furnace he [the priest, NW][168] re-casts bodies in Baptism; and as in
> a fire he consumes the weeds of mortality. The drug of the Spirit he casts
> into the water, as into a furnace; and he purifies the image of men from
> uncleanness. By the heat of the Spirit he purges the rust of body and soul;
> and instead of clay they acquire the hue of heavenly beings.[169]

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164 22,357:5–9; *s* :3–6. Cf.: "By the heat of iniquity our mind was withered, and its fruits had
dropped off; and He sprinkled His gift as dew and watered our soul. The grievous thirst
of death had slain our body; and He buried it in the water, and life teemed in its mortal-
ity. The rust of passions had defaced the beauty of our excellence; and He turned again
and painted us in spiritual colours which may not be effaced. Cunningly He mixed the
colours for the renewal of our race, with oil and water and the invincible power of the
Spirit" (22,341:3–11; *s* :2–7).

165 The image of 'mixing' is typical for the Syriac tradition (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 9–10, 145n13).

166 21,341:9–11; *s* :6–7.

167 22,356:9; *s* :6. In his portrayal of God as a Painter, Narsai is very close to Ephrem (cf. *On
Virginity* 7.5, quoted in Chapter 6, n316).

168 See the discussion on the position of the priest below.

169 :343:35–344:4; *s* 343:21–344:1. See also 22,356:5–6 (*s* :3–5); 22,364:27–31 (*s* :16–19); 21:349:
36–37 (*s* :21–23). Other occurrences of the image are found in his homily *On Epiphany* in
which Narsai e.g. puts into the mouth of John the Baptist concerning Jesus: "With fire and
the Spirit, He will destroy the (thorny) growth of mortality and bring forth the spiritual
seed of a (new) life for the dead. In the crucible (ܟܘܪܐ) of the Spirit, He will mould
the image that iniquity has rendered odious …" (139–141; ed. and tr. McLeod, *Metrical
Homilies*, 79; see further 250, 259–260 (p. 87), and 367–372 (p. 93)). The baptismal font
as a furnace is a common image in Syrian tradition (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 104–106; 157–158).
It probably developed from the association of the Holy Spirit with fire (Matt. 3:11; Acts
2:1–4), combined with the early tradition of the emergence of fire/light at the baptism
of Jesus (although metallurgy as an image of purification is already current in the Old
Testament, Isa. 1:25). The earliest certain witness here is Justin Martyr, who mentions that
Jesus "stepped down into the water and a fire ignited the waters of the Jordan" (*Dial.
Trypho* 88.3; ed. Archambault, *Dialogue avec Tryphon*, 72; tr. Falls, *Dialogue with Trypho*,
137). A more dominant strand of tradition attests to the appearance of light instead of
fire. Early witnesses are two Vetus Latina manuscripts, *The Gospel of the Ebionites*, and
Tatian's *Diatessaron*. (A discussion of the matter is found in Petersen, *Tatian's Diatessaron*,

In his 21st homily, which more explicitly concerns the ritual of baptism, Narsai develops the image of re-creation as rebirth. The key scriptural passage here is Gen. 1:20–21, which says that the waters 'bring forth' (ܐܦܩ) living creatures. These waters of creation are the type of the baptismal water (the antitype). Just as the waters of creation "bring forth" living creatures (Gen. 1:20–21), the water of baptism brings forth new men like a birth-giving 'womb'.[170] In this way, baptism can be seen to effectuate both re-creation and rebirth:

> An invention that had not been the divine nod discovered, that without seed man should beget (children) from the midst of the water. Where ever had the like been done or achieved that the bosom (ܥܘܒܐ) of the waters should bring forth without wedlock? Who ever heard that kind should bring forth that which was not its kind, as now a senseless nature (brings forth) the rational? Even though the waters brought forth creeping things and birds: that water has brought forth man has never been heard. This is a wonder, and, as we may say, full of astonishment, that the womb (ܟܪܣܐ) of the water should conceive and bring forth babes full grown. It is altogether a new thing, and great is the lesson given therein, that within an hour should be accomplished the period of conception and birth. Outside the order that is set in nature does its order proceed; and it is not trammelled with a growth that is gradual.
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> Come, hearer, listen to the wonder of the new birth, the conception whereof and the bringing forth are accomplished in one hour. Come, O beholder, look upon the painter that paints babes: and while yet the word lingers in the mouth (the birth) has come forth from the womb (ܟܪܣܐ).[171]

14–20; Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 126–127n51; McDonnell, *Baptism of Jesus*, 106–108; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 110–112.) Especially the influential *Diatessaron* may account for the distribution of the conception in Syriac-speaking Christianity. It is a matter of debate whether the fire or the light tradition is the more original (Ferguson, *Baptism*, 111; Myers, *Spirit Epicleses*, 126–127n51). Anyway, it is important to note that before the invention of electricity, fire and light were closely related. The existence of both a fire and a light tradition is therefore easily explained: if there is light, there is fire and vice versa. In Syriac 'to set light, kindle' (ܢܘܪ) and 'fire' (ܢܘܪܐ) have the same root ܢܘܪ. What is more, the difference between 'fire' (ܢܘܪܐ) and 'light' (ܢܘܗܪܐ) in Syriac is just one character. This close relation between fire and light probably explains the rise of the double fire/light tradition, indifferently which appeared 'first'.

170   Narsai uses both ܟܪܣܐ (s 21,341:15; 21,342:5; 21,346:16; 21,347:13; 21,348:7) and ܥܘܒܐ (s 21,341:11; 21,344:25; 21,345:5; 21,346:10; 22,358:2). For the image of baptism as birth and the water as womb, cf. *On Epiphany*, 127, 143, 162, 167, 269, 294–295, 297, 329, 533, 541 (ed. and tr. McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 78–79, 80–81, 86–87, 88–89, 90–91, 102–103, 104–105).

171   21,341:13–342:8; s 341:9–342:5. The image of the waters of creation as a type of the baptismal

As Brock[172] rightly remarks, it is noteworthy that Narsai, although he draws the parallel between the waters of baptism and creation, suppresses any parallel between the Spirit's role in baptism and creation. We trace the influence here of both Ephrem and Theodore, who were of the opinion that the ܪܘܚܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ of Gen. 1:2 is not the 'divine Spirit', but 'a mighty wind'.[173]

Narsai does not limit the image of birth to baptism, but extends it to the Church and the Eucharist, which figure the Mother of the newborn child and his nourishment respectively: "A spiritual mother prepares spiritual milk for his life; and instead of the breasts she puts into his mouth the Body and Blood".[174]

The image of creation/rebirth is definitely the dominant one in homily 21. For this precise reason, it is noteworthy that when Narsai discusses the ritual of baptism itself, he uses only the image of dying/rising (Rom. 6),[175] probably because this image best fits the actual performance of the ritual. This time, the font is not pictured as a 'womb', but as a 'tomb' (ܩܒܪܐ): "It (Baptism) fills for men the office of the grave (ܩܒܪܐ) mystically".[176] In baptism, man dies and rises mystically after the pattern of Christ's death and resurrection.[177] In the watery grave, "the might of the Evil One and of Death" is dissolved "by the power of the name of the Divinity", which "dwells in the visible waters".[178] Like other mystagogues[179], Narsai sees the three immersions prefigured in the three days of Jesus' stay in the grave:

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water is very old and Daniélou even argues that it is "an aspect, which is fundamentally biblical, of the parallelism between the first and the second creation" (*Bible and Liturgy*, 72; cf. 70–75; see Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 98–102 and also his *"Ruaḥ Elōhīm"* for references in Syrian sources). It is Tertullian who provides the first clear testimony of this analogy in (*On Baptism* 4; ed. and tr. Evans, *Baptism*, 8–11).

172 *Holy Spirit*, 100.

173 *Holy Spirit*, 99; *"Ruaḥ Elōhīm,"* 330. Although Theodore probably was Narsai's most favourite source (idem, 333–334).

174 21,347:18–20; *s* :11–13.

175 The same image is found (only) a few times scattered through homily 22, see 22,358:26–27 (*s* :16–17); 22,364:31–32 (*s* :19–20); 22,364:33–34 (*s* :20–21); 22,364:39–40 (*s* :24–25). Cf. *On Epiphany*, 273, 295, 542 (ed. and tr. McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 86–87, 88–89, 104–105).

176 21,345:35–36; *s* :21.

177 "His death and life men depict in Baptism; and after they have died with Him they have risen and have been resuscitated mystically" (21,348:38–349:2; *s* :348:23–349:1).

178 21,345:28–31; *s* :16–18.

179 The association of the three immersions with the three days Christ spent in the tomb seems to have been very popular and is widely attested. See the Jerusalem *MC* (*MC*. 2.4), Basil the Great (*Letter* 236; *On the Holy Spirit* 15.35), Leo I (*Letter* 16.4), Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna (*Sermon* 113.5), *AR* 11, Severus of Antioch (*Homily* 90), Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite (*Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* II,3.7), John Damascene (*On the Orthodox Faith* 4.9), and cf. Gregory of Nyssa (*On the Day of Lights*; *Catechetical Oration* 35). Many Syrian commen-

> With a mystery of our Redeemer he goes into the bosom of the font (lit. 'of baptism') after the manner of those three days in the midst of the tomb. Three days was our Redeemer with the dead: so also he that is baptized: the three times are three days. He verily dies by a symbol of that death which the Quickener of all died; and he surely lives with a type of the life without end. Sin and death he puts off and casts away in Baptism, after the manner of those garments which our Lord departing left in the tomb.[180]

So, baptism is the type of Christ's death and resurrection (the antitype) and looks backward. Yet, at the same time it looks forward as the type of the final resurrection (the antitype).[181] Concerning the latter, it is interesting to note that Narsai compares the voice of the bishop at baptism to the trumpet at the final resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Th. 4:16).[182]

Besides the more prominent baptismal images discussed above, Narsai employs other imagery as well. He uses bridal imagery when he depicts the newly baptised "as a bridegroom on the day of the marriage-supper" and says that the neophyte "fulfils a sort of marriage-supper in Baptism".[183] Baptism is portrayed here as a betrothal of (the soul of) the baptismal candidate to Christ. This popular image in early Syrian tradition is strongly related to the baptism of Christ himself—which was considered as the betrothal of Christ to the Church[184]—especially because in 'sacred time' the baptism of each individual

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tators after Severus and Narsai make the same point (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 97). Connolly, 51n2 maintains that Narsai got the idea from Cyril. It seems more likely, however, that Narsai borrowed it from *AR* (Brock, "Commentaries," 55; cf. Witkamp, "Critical Comparison," 517–518n14).

180 21,346:18–26; *s* :10–15 (addition between parentheses is Connolly's).

181 "The Evil One and Death are undone by Baptism; and the resurrection of the body and the redemption of the soul are preached therein. In it, as in a tomb, body and soul are buried, and they die and live (again) with a type of the resurrection that is to be at the end" (21,345:31–37; *s* :18–21) and "His birth (in Baptism) is a symbol of that birth which is to be at the end …" (21,347:8–10; *s* :5–6). This is the only time when Narsai denotes the final resurrection as a 'birth'.

182 21,345:36–37; *s* :21–22.

183 21,346:32–34; *s* :19–20. With reference to the Eucharist, Narsai speaks of "A beauteous bride-chamber He has fitted on earth for a type of that which is above …" (21,349:24–26; *s* :14–16).

184 Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 66. In his homily *On Epiphany*, Narsai says: "He [John the Baptist, NW] compared him [Jesus, NW] to a bridegroom because of his love for men; and he called the bride, the members of his race who adhered to him. (This one) fulfilled (the role) of the bridegroom at the marriage feast of faith and took to himself the Church of the Gentiles (as) his betrothed of holiness. Instead of purple, he covered her with the garment of bap-

baptizand coincides with Christ's.[185] Although Narsai does not explicitly make the connection, he definitely alludes to the conception when he speaks of the 'betrothal' (ܡܟܝܪܘܬܐ) between Christ and the Church and calls Christ '[h]er betrothed' (ܡܟܝܪܗ).[186]

Another aspect of the bridal imagery is the wedding garment, which Narsai seems to hint at when he utters concerning the newly baptised: "Instead of swaddling-clothes they cast garments upon his limbs, and adorn him as a bridegroom on the day of the marriage-supper". Yet, the baptismal robe particularly symbolises the future glory:

> By the beauty of his garments he proclaims the beauty that is to be: here is a type, but there the verity which is not simulated. To the Kingdom of the height which is not dissolved he is summoned and called; and the type depicts beforehand and proclaims its truth. With a type of that glory which is incorruptible he puts on the garments, that he may imitate mystically the things to be.[187]

In a similar way, the vestment of the bishop denotes the grandeur of the mystery of baptism:

> With fair garments he covers his body outwardly, and the raiment of the Spirit adorns his soul within. Completely adorned he stands before the beholders, that by his adornment he may reveal to men concerning the things that are about to be (done). He becomes as a mirror to the eyes of his fellow-servants, that they may look upon him and conceive the hope of being glorified. A mark he sets before their eyes by the garments that are upon him, that they may be aiming to be adorned spiritually. This he teaches by the adornment that is upon his limbs: that the mystery which is (administered) by his hands clothes with glory him that approaches it.[188]

The last sentence of this passage alludes to the 'robe of glory', which mankind lost at the Fall and regains at baptism[189], and parallels the previously men-

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tism and placed on her (head) a crown wholly plaited with the seals of the Spirit" (410–414; ed. and tr. McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 94–95).

185   Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 67.
186   21,347:22–23; *s* :14.
187   21,346:35–347:6; *s* 346:21–347:4.
188   21,344:4–14; *s* :2–8.
189   For a discussion of the clothing imagery of the 'robe of glory' in Syriac tradition, see espe-

tioned 'wedding garment'.[190] At another place, Narsai refers to the same image when he says that the Lord "clothed" the neophytes "with the glorious robe of Baptism" (ܐܘܣܛܠ ܫܒܝܚܬܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ).[191] We see then, that Narsai uses both the symbolism of clothing and clothing metaphors.

To depict the status of the newly baptised, Narsai takes up again the battle imagery he introduced earlier concerning the signing on the forehead. He portrays them as athletes who, strengthened by the "hidden power from the water", have "conquered (in) the great battle with the strong one". The announcement of their victory frightened and startled the evil spirits. The neophytes received garlands from mankind and the King showered them with gifts and honour. He granted them a place in his "secret palace" and set "the table of life immortal" before them (a further elaboration on the Eucharist follows).[192]

A final remark concerning Narsai's baptismal imagery concerns the application of the parable of the prodigal son. As discussed earlier in the present study,[193] Narsai applies this parable as a baptismal narrative in both his liturgical homilies. He sees the story enacted in the baptismal rite. Like the Prodigal

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cially Brock, "Clothing Metaphors" and his *Luminous Eye*, 85–97. The general idea is that the four stages of salvation history are described with a symbolic 'theology of clothing', which combines three elements: Paul's typology of the first and second Adam, his idea of 'putting on Christ' at baptism, and Jewish speculative thought concerning the clothing of Adam and Eve before and after the fall. At the first stage, before the fall, Adam and Eve were clothed with 'robes of glory' or 'light', which were lost at the fall, the second stage. In order to regain humanity's lost attire, Christ 'put on Adam' or 'a body'. Central to this third stage is Christ's baptism in the Jordan. Not only did Christ at his descent sanctify all baptismal water in sacred time, He also deposited the 'robe of glory' in the water. In his *Liturgical Homilies*, Narsai only hints at this when he says: "Our Lord has opened up for us the sweet spring of Baptism …" (21,341:1; S :1). He is somewhat more explicit, but merely on the sanctification of the water, in his homily *On Epiphany*: "The high priest [i.e. Christ, NW] descended into the water and bathed and sanctified it and conferred upon in [*sic*.] the power of the Spirit to give life. The holy one drew near to the weak and inanimate element and made it a womb which begets men spiritually" (291–294; ed. and tr. McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 88–89). At the fourth stage, i.e. Christian baptism, man is able to regain the lost 'robe of glory' from the baptismal water. This is possible because, at the moment of consecration, every font parallels the Jordan in sacred time. In this way, every individual Christian descends into the Jordan at his baptism, and clothes himself with the 'robe of glory', which Christ deposited there. As with Narsai, the 'robe of glory' specifically points to the eschatological reality (which supersedes the original paradisiacal state).

190   Based on Matt. 22:11–12. Brock, "Clothing Metaphors," 20.
191   21,348:4; *S* :2–3.
192   21,349:7–24; *S* :4–14.
193   See p. 124 and p. 166.

Son, the baptismal candidate returns to his father (God), is restored to his position, receives the prestigious garment (robe of baptism), and is admitted to the banquet (Eucharist).

That the mystery of baptism is not a human but a divine work becomes especially clear by the character of the baptismal formula and the consecration of the water. The passive nature of the formula, "Such a one is baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Spirit", indicates that it is not the bishop "that baptizes, but the power that is set in the names. The names give forgiveness of iniquity, not a man …".[194]

Narsai emphasises that the benefits of baptism are not effectuated by common water, "but by the power of the name of the Divinity".[195] He pays considerable attention to the consecration of the water[196] and uses different images to portray the ritual. So, the bishop is likened to Moses, who stands by the sea. But "instead of a rod he lifts up his word over the dumb (elements)".[197] The (God-given) authority of the bishop surpasses that of Moses as the latter's action resulted in neither the sanctification of the water, nor the cleansing of the iniquity of his people. Another image portrays the bishop as an imitator of the Creator: "Like the Creator he also commands the common water, and instead of light there dawns from it the power of life".[198] A final image compares the bishop to the angel Gabriel who announced the birth of Jesus to Mary. As the words of the angel concerned the womb of Mary, so the words of the bishop pertain to the womb of the water. Yet, the office of the bishop surpasses that of the angel "for he gives hope to them that are without hope".[199]

Although Narsai leaves no doubt that baptism is a Divine work—it is God himself who operates through human and material elements—he holds the opinion that God has granted his power to the clergy. A substantial part of his two liturgical homilies consists of a panegyric on the priesthood. For example:

> He [God, NW] chose Him priests as mediators between Him and or people; and He has sent them on an embassy to men. To them He gave the great signet of His Divinity, that with it they might seal the work of the renovation of all. To them He entrusted the boundless wealth of the Spirit,

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194   21,346:10–13; *s* :5–7.
195   21,345:27–28; *s* :16.
196   At least three pages out of a total of seven (concerning baptism) in Connolly's translation.
197   21,344:20; *s* :10–11.
198   21,344:35–37; *s* :22–23.
199   21,345:17–18; *s* :10–11.

that they might lovingly distribute it according to its greatness. A spiritual art He taught them, that they should be tracing the image of life on the tablet of the waters. Ah, corporeal beings, painters of the Spirit, without hands! Ah, mortals, mixers of life with mortality! Ah, priesthood, how greatly is it exalted above all, having won a station in the height and the depth by the power of Him that has chosen it … Ah, Creator, that came and renewed His creation, and has given to the work of His own hands a pen, that it should depict itself! Who would not marvel at the greatness of His love and His graciousness, that He has made our clay the creator of a creation, after His own likeness? … To our own nature did He give authority, together with its renewal, that it should create itself a new creation of immortals.[200]

Narsai unmistakably has a high view of the priesthood. But at the same time, he makes very clear that its authority does not lie in itself but is granted by God. The priesthood is God's freely chosen instrument to restore humanity by distributing the wealth of the Spirit of whom it is the treasure-keeper.[201] But with this special task comes a high responsibility as Narsai lucidly argues in his 32nd homily, *On the Church and on the Priesthood.* In this homily, Narsai directly calls on the priests to tend the flock as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.[202] He confronts them with the fact that everything they have and are is due to God's mercy; they have nothing to boast about: "Who has permitted thee, miserable dust, to take hold of fire? And who had made thee to distribute life, thou son of paupers? … it is the power of the help of the God of all that has raised up thy unworthiness".[203] Priests who abuse their authority, who do not

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200   22,357:14–38; *s* :8–24.

201   Cf. 22,357:12 (*s* :7); 22,4365:35 (*s* :21). Kappes, "Voice of Many Waters," 542–543 contends that Narsai's emphasis on Spirit and priesthood—at the (presumed) expense of Jesus Christ and the Christian community (the name 'Jesus' occurs nowhere and 'Christ' only once)—would intend an adaptation of the Gospel to an audience from a Zoroastrian background in which Spirit and priesthood are common concepts. Although it may be possible that Narsai emphasises the authority of the priesthood in order to meet the expectations of his audience, it is important to note that the idea of the clergy as mediator between God and men is firmly rooted in (Syrian) tradition and already attested by Ignatius (*Letter to the Magnesians* 6; ed. and tr. Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 206–207); *Letter to the Ephesians* 2–3 (ed. and tr. Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 184–185); *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 8 (ed. and tr. Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 254–257) and the *Didascalia* (9; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 103 line 17 ff.; Vol. 402, 100 line 3 ff.).

202   32,151:25–152:6; *s* 151:16–152:2–3.

203   32,149:28–150:6; *s* :149:24–150:4.

pursue the wellbeing of the Church but of their own, are foolish and wicked servants and will eventually be punished severely.[204]

7.3   The Rituals Contextualised

Although some churches may have performed initiation by anointing only,[205] it is clear that, following the praxis of the *Acts of the Apostles*, new members were usually incorporated into the community by a rite including water baptism. What this oldest part of initiation looked like in Syria and its vicinity is the concern of the present section. We will discuss in consecutive order: *Didascalia*, the *Acts of Thomas*, Aphrahat, Ephrem, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, John Chrysostom, the rite of Jerusalem, the *Testamentum Domini*, the Syriac *Acts of John*, *AR*, and the *Barberini Euchologion*. The results of this survey provides us with the framework for the comparison of baptism in Theodore and Narsai.

7.3.1   Didascalia Apostolorum

In this Church order, immersion follows the one and only anointing.[206] The ritual was usually performed by the bishop,[207] but could also be administered by a presbyter or deacon.[208] Yet, female ministers were not allowed.[209] The mention of "the invocation of the divine names in the water"[210] suggests the uttering of a Trinitarian formula. Interestingly, in chapter 9 we find the additional information that the bishop laid his hand on the initiand's head and recited Psalm 2:7: "Thou art my son: this day have I begotten thee".[211] As stated earlier,[212] it seems more likely that this ritual concerns the immersion part instead of the anointing, and we may conjecture that it directly followed the water bath as a confirmation of the neophyte's new position.

Initiation as a whole (anointing-baptism) brings about filial adoption, new birth, forgiveness of sins, and release from idolatry and the 'second legisla-

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204   32,152:29–39; *s* :17–23.

205   Myers, "Initiation by Anointing". Cf. p. 262 above.

206   Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 436–440 for a discussion of baptism in the *Didascalia*.

207   *DA* 9; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 103 lines 21–22, 109 line 7–110 line 5; Vol. 402, 100 line 7, 104 lines 6–24.

208   *DA* 16; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 407, 173 lines 14–15; Vol. 408, 157 lines 1–3.

209   *DA* 15; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 407, 166 lines 12–20; Vol. 408, 151 lines 6–13.

210   *DA* 16; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 407, 173 lines 16–17; Vol. 408, 157, lines 4–5.

211   *DA* 9; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 109; Vol. 402, 104.

212   See p. 254n223.

tion'.[213] Furthermore, the neophytes receive the Holy Spirit, gain admission to the Eucharist, and become "partakers and joint heirs of the promise of God".[214]

7.3.2   Acts of Thomas

Because of its focus on the anointing, the *Acts of Thomas*[215] does not pay much attention to (reflection on) the water rite, which is described in a cursory way. Therefore, only some general features can be given. Baptism usually[216] occurs in water and is accompanied by the Trinitarian formula "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". The mention of (un)dressing in chapters 121, 133, and 157 suggests that the initiands were baptised stark naked.

The *Acts* do not provide a specific mystagogy on the water bath. By initiation as a whole—with a special emphasis on the anointing—man receives forgiveness of sins, purification, cleansing/healing, renewal (old man/new man), godly benefits, and inner peace. Furthermore, the neophyte becomes God's own and a participant of the messianic reality.[217]

7.3.3   *Aphrahat*

His rite of initiation probably occurred sometime around Easter.[218] First of all, 'the priests' (ܟܗܢ̈ܐ) consecrated the font by invoking the Spirit to descend into the font and to transform it into a life-giving womb.[219] The baptismal formula may have been declaratory and Trinitarian.[220] Based on the images of 'putting on the Spirit' and the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan (see below), Dun-

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213   *DA* 26; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 407, 246 lines 19–21; Vol. 408, 228 lines 14–16. 'Second legislation' refers in the *Didascalia* to the lawgiving after (and as a consequence of) Israel's transgression with the golden calf, which is distinguished from God's instructions before that time.

214   *DA* 9; ed. and tr. Vööbus, Vol. 401, 103 lines 21–22, 109 line 7–110 line 5; Vol. 402, 100 line 7, 104 lines 6–24. For the reception of the Holy Spirit, see also the discussion of the *Didascalia* in Chapter 6.

215   Chapter 26–27, 49, 120–121, 131–133, 157–158. Syriac: ed. Wright, I, 192–193, 217–218, 290–291, 301, 323–324; tr. Wright, II, 166–167, 188–189, 257–259, 267, 289–290. Greek: ed. Bonnet, 141–143, 165–166, 229–231, 238–240, 266–269; tr. Elliott, 457–458, 467, 493–494, 497, 504–505. For a more elaborate description of these five accounts of initiation, see the discussion of the *AT* in Chapter 6.

216   See p. 262.

217   See the introductory prayers in chapter 25, 48 and further 121, 132, 156–157.

218   See p. 263.

219   *Dem.* 6.14; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 292–293; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 152. Cf. Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 123–129.

220   *Dem.* 23.63; ed. Parisot, Nau & Kmosko, *PS I.2*, 134; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 305. See p. 265 above for a discussion of this passage. Cf. Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 131–132.

can[221] contends that baptism was by immersion. Although it is certainly possible that the candidates were fully immersed, I disagree with Duncan that this is more or less implied by the baptismal images used by Aphrahat. The main problem is that Aphrahat refers to baptism only in passing and thus we remain ignorant whether the abovementioned baptismal images concern his theology of baptism in general or his mystagogy of the ritual in particular. Only in the latter case may the images reflect the actual ritual.[222]

Aphrahat calls baptism "the rushma of your salvation"[223] and likens baptism to the "second circumcision" performed by Joshua[224]. Yet, his most popular image seems to be that of 'new birth', which he distinguishes from the carnal birth.[225]

In his 12th Demonstration, *On Passover*, Aphrahat draws a close connection between baptism and Christ's suffering and death. He calls Passover "a mystery (ܐܪܙܐ) of baptism" and speaks of "the mystery of (ܐܪܙ) the baptism of the passion of his death", followed by a conflated quotation of Rom. 6:3–4 and Col. 2:12, saying: "'You were buried with him by baptism into death and you

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221   Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 131.

222   Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 220–222.

223   *Dem.* 23.63; ed. Parisot, Nau & Kmosko, *PS 1.2*, 134; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 305.

224   The key to understand Aphrahat's way of reasoning is found in *Dem.* 11.6 (ed. Parisot, *PS 1.1*, 485; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 9), where he explains that God's instruction to Joshua to "circumcise the sons of Israel a second time" (Josh. 5:2) implies that the people were already circumcised in their heart (Deut. 10:16). So, we have the pattern of spiritual circumcision (the first circumcision) followed by circumcision of the flesh (the second circumcision). According to Aphrahat, the Christian pattern is similar, with one crucial, difference, that the Old Testament circumcision of the flesh is replaced by the New Testament baptism. Because baptism is preceded by the circumcision of the heart, it is called "the second circumcision" ("Blessed are those who are circumcised in the foreskin of the heart and who are born from water, the second circumcision"; *Dem.* 11.12; ed. Parisot, *PS 1.1*, 504; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 17). This indicates that Aphrahat certainly identifies the ritual of baptism with a 'circumcision', but as a "second circumcision" distinguishes it from the "true circumcision", i.e. of the heart (contra Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 32), of which baptism is a fulfilment: "When he [the sinner, NW] has circumcised his heart from evil deeds, then he goes first to baptism, the fulfilment of true circumcision ..." (*Dem.* 12.9; ed. Parisot, *PS 1.1*, 528; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 28). Cf. Lattke, "'Taufe' und 'untertauchen',' 1128, who makes the same case.

225   *Dem.* 6.14 (ed. Parisot, *PS 1.1*, 292–293; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 152); *Dem.* 11.12 (ed. Parisot, *PS 1.1*, 504; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 17); *Dem.* 14.16 (ed. Parisot, *PS 1.1*, 613; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 66); *Dem.* 14.38 (ed. Parisot, *PS 1.1*, 680; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 94). Cf. Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 36–43, 137; Lattke, "'Taufe' und 'untertauchen',' 1128.

have risen with him by the power of God'".[226] Be that as it may, Aphrahat does not apply the image of death/rising to baptism as a ritual mimesis of Christ's passion.[227] Duncan has offered the following explanation for Aphrahat's somewhat enigmatic phraseology mentioned above. Firstly, he points to Aphrahat's contention that Christ instituted baptism by washing the feet of his disciples on the evening of the Last Supper.[228] Combined with Aphrahat's conviction that Christ was in fact already dead from the time of the institution of the Last Supper after the Passover meal,[229] it becomes understandable why the Persian Sage speaks of "the mystery of baptism of the passion of his death" or, alternatively, of baptism as "the symbol (ܐܪܙܐ) of the passion of our Saviour".[230] This connection between baptism and the passion of Christ is further enlightened when we recall that in Aphrahat's church (the remembrance of the institution of) baptism was closely tied with the annual celebration of Passover, which "was a commemoration of the passion and death of our Lord, with no observance of the Resurrection".[231]

The crossing of the Red Sea[232] and the Jordan[233] are seen by Aphrahat as Old Testament types of baptism, representing respectively its negative side, the deliverance from sin, and its positive side, the entering of life.[234] The baptismal font is "the true Jordan".[235] Still another image is used in a somewhat obscure

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226 *Dem.* 12.10; ed. Parisot, *PS* I.1, 528 line 25–529 line 8; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 28.

227 Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 79.

228 Ibid., 80; cf. 67–78. *Dem.* 12.10; ed. Parisot, *PS* I.1, 528–529, 532; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 28–29.

229 "For after he had eaten his body and drank his blood, he was counted with the dead" (*Dem.* 12.6; ed. Parisot, *PS* I.1, 517; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 23).

230 *Dem.* 12.10; ed. Parisot, *PS* I.1, 529 lines 16–17; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 29.

231 Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 80–81.

232 *Dem.* 12.10; ed. Parisot, *PS* I.1, 528–529, 532; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 28–29. Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 51–56; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 490; Skira, "Aphrahat's Theology of Baptism," 121.

233 "Joshua, the son of Nun (ܝܫܘܥ ܒܪ ܢܘܢ) caused the people to pass to the land of promise; Jesus our Saviour (ܝܫܘܥ ܦܪܘܩܢ) promised the land of Life to all who have passed through the true Jordan, believed and have circumcised the foreskin of his heart" (*Dem.* 11.12; ed. Parisot, *PS* I.1, 501; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 16). This quotation is part of a longer passage in which Aphrahat compares Jesus to Joshua. Many early Christian writers saw Joshua as a type of Jesus, not least because in both Greek and Syriac the names of 'Joshua' and 'Jesus' are exactly the same. To distinguish the two, Joshua is commonly called 'Jesus, the son of Nun'.

234 Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 56–57; cf. Skira, "Aphrahat's Theology of Baptism," 121.

235 *Dem.* 11.11 (see n224 above) and 11.12 (see n233 above).

and (therefore) debated passage in *Dem.* 7, *On Penitents*.[236] Here, Aphrahat sees the testing and selecting of baptismal candidates foreshadowed in the story of Gideon preparing his army to fight the Midianites. The selection of adequate soldiers by the way they drank from the water (Judg. 7:4–7) is "the type (ܡܰܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) of baptism and the mystery (ܐܪܙܐ) of the contest and an example of the solitaries".[237]

The effects of baptism are[238] a) remission of sins,[239] b) new life,[240] c) the reception of the Holy Spirit,[241] d) the putting on of Christ,[242] e) the putting on of spiritual armour,[243] and f) incorporation into the Church.[244] The 'putting

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236   Parisot, *PS I.1*, 341, 344–345, 348–349, 352–353, 356–357; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 173–181. In this passage, Aphrahat seems to limit baptism to a particular group of ascetics. The interpretation and contextualisation of this passage is part of the larger debate concerning the recipients of baptism in Aphrahat's church. Some have proposed that Aphrahat is a witness to the more widespread early Syrian custom to baptise only celibates (so Burkitt, *Outside the Roman Empire*, 50–53; see also his *Early Eastern Christianity*, 125–127). Others maintain that in Aphrahat's time baptism was administered to married and unmarried people alike, but that *Dem.* 7 draws upon an older liturgy, which, although still in use, reflects a time when only those prepared to live in marital abstinence were baptised (so Vööbus, *Celibacy*, 45–58). Still others contend that marital abstinence was not a requirement for baptism as such, but only concerned those who combined baptism with the vow of celibacy to become a member of a select group, the so-called 'Sons' or 'Daughters of the Covenant' (*Benay/benāt Qyāmā*) (so Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 82–103; Murray, "Exhortation to Candidates" and *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 11–17; for a discussion of the *Benay/benāt Qyāma*, see also Moffett, *Christianity in Asia*, 97–100). The last-mentioned view may be confirmed by the *Testamentum Domini*, which mentions that those desiring to dedicate themselves to a life of celibacy were baptised first (II.8; ed. Rahmani, 126, line 11–12; tr. Sperry-White, 27).

237   *Dem.* 7.19; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 344; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 175.

238   Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 133–147; Lattke, "'Taufe' und 'untertauchen'," 1128–1132.

239   "… the baptism for the forgiveness of the sins …" (*Dem.* 11.11; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 501; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 15); cf. 4.18 and 12.10.

240   *Dem.* 6.1; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 252; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 132. Cf. the references on 'new birth' in n225 above.

241   *Dem.* 6.14; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 292–293; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 152–153.

242   See below.

243   "Whoever has put on armour from the (baptismal) water, let him not take off his armour lest he finds himself defeated" (*Dem.* 6.1; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 252; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 132). Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 145 may be right that the 'spiritual armour' equates the Holy Spirit or the equipment of the Holy Spirit. But it seems that we can be somewhat more specific. The above passage is directly followed by "Whoever is taking a shield against the Evil One let him guard himself against the arrows he will shoot at him". There is little doubt that this refers to Eph. 6:16 and it seems likely, therefore, that the same holds for the 'armour'.

244   See below.

on of Christ' and the reception of the Holy Spirit are intermingled concepts, probably because 'the Spirit of Christ' is equated with Christ.[245] Thus, Aphrahat can say that the baptismal candidates "clothe themselves" in the Spirit,[246] as well as that the humble ones "are clothed in Christ as with a good garment".[247] The last mentioned effect, 'incorporation into the Church', is rightly stressed by Duncan. Aphrahat says: "When he has circumcised his heart from evil deeds, then he goes first to baptism, the fulfilment of true circumcision, and is united with the people of God, and (then) he participates in the body and blood of Christ".[248] It is clear from this passage that the condition for initiation into the Church is fulfilled by the baptismal rite. As discussed above concerning the rites of Theodore and Narsai[249] and confirmed here by Aphrahat's rite, partaking in the Eucharist is not part of initiation, but presupposes it.

7.3.4 Ephrem

In particular his seventh hymn of the collection *On Virginity* contains interesting allusions to the baptismal ceremony, which probably occurred at or around Easter after a period of fasting.[250] The candidates first stripped,[251] then they were anointed, baptised, and finally vested with white robes.[252] Baptism was Trinitarian and consisted of three immersions,[253] possibly accompanied by a

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245   Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 44.

246   *Dem.* 6.14; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1* 293; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 152.

247   *Dem.* 9.4; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1* 414; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations I*, 204.

248   *Dem.* 12.19; ed. Parisot, *PS I.1*, 528 lines; tr. Valavanolickal, *Demonstrations II*, 28.

249   See p. 65 ff.

250   *On Virginity*. 7.2; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 184–185 (quoted on p. 267n305 above). For a discussion of this passage and other allusions to the baptismal rite in *On Virginity* 7, see especially Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 162 ff.

251   *On Faith* 85.7, 10 (ed. Beck, *Fide*, 261, 262; tr. Brock, *Harp of the Spirit*, 156; cf. his *Luminous Eye*, 107); *On Faith* 82.10 (ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 254–255). Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 507.

252   *On Virginity*. 7.2; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 184–185.

253   Baptism "gives birth to them with triple pangs, accompanied by the three glorious names, of Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (*On Virginity*. 7.5; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 188–189; cf. *On Virginity*, 27.4; *On Epiphany* 11.8). Also Ephrem's own baptism consisted of a triple immersion ("Baptizatus sum tripliciter …"; *Against Heresies* 3.13, in Beck, "Baptême," 124). See further Beck, *Taufe*, 95 and Ferguson, *Baptism*, 508 on the Trinitarian character of baptism in Ephrem. Full immersion is suggested by phrases like "he descends and buries himself in the water" (*On Virginity*. 7.10; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 192–193) and "yet Your very head was subject to just a small river, in that it bent down and was baptized therein" (*On Faith* 10.20; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 212–213). Although the latter concerns the baptism of Jesus, it is not unlikely that the wording reflects the custom of the day. Also Ephrem's favourite comparison of baptismal candidates with pearl divers suggests a total immersion (cf. p. 269).

threefold creedal interrogation.[254] The ritual was administered by the bishop, assisted by deacons.[255] Having been initiated, the neophyte was invited to participate in the Eucharist.[256]

Ephrem recognises several types and precursors of Christian baptism in the Old Testament, the more prominent of which are circumcision,[257] ablutions (such as the washing of Naaman), and the sprinkling of water and blood with hyssop.[258] These imperfect Old Testament foreshadowings are fulfilled in Christian baptism.[259] Unlike the types, baptism results in a complete cleansing of the whole man.[260] To the above, we may add a few other types of baptism. Firstly, the waters of creation. Although Ephrem identifies the ܪܘܚܐ of Gen. 1:2 as 'wind' and not as 'the Holy Spirit',[261] he can say concerning the font that "the Holy Spirit hovers over its streams"[262]. Secondly and thirdly, there is no doubt

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254 Beck, *Taufe*, 115. Possibly the baptismal candidate also made a profession of faith before being immersed (Ferguson, *Baptism*, 508).

255 "It is the priesthood which ministers to this womb as it gives birth … a crown of Levites surrounds it, the chief priest is the minister" (*On Virginity*. 7.8; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191). It is likely that "the chief priest" denotes the bishop. Brock & Kiraz, 191n8 indicate that 'Levites' is a common term for 'deacons'. Beck, *Taufe*, 101–105, 183 contends that the minister's hand rested on the baptizand's head during the ritual.

256 *On Virginity*. 7.8; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191.

257 Baptism is called 'the circumcision of Christ', 'circumcision of the heart', 'the second circumcision' or 'the invisible circumcision' (Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 40–42).

258 Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 33–49; cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 500–502.

259 "By his baptism were abolished the bathing and sprinkling that the elders of the [Jewish] People taught." (*On Virginity* 8.10; ed. Beck, *Virginitate*, 30; tr. McVey, *Hymns*, 299).

260 "All the sprinklings of the Levites are unable to pardon one People with their weak hyssops. Blessed are the peoples [whose] hyssop was the Merciful One, Who purified them with mercy." (*On Virginity* 31.4; ed. Beck, *Virginitate*, 114; tr. McVey, *Hymns*, 399).

261 Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 99–100.

262 *On Virginity* 7.8; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191. It is worth noting that the author of *On Epiphany* 8.15, unlike Ephrem, draws the parallel between the hovering of the Spirit over the primordial waters and the water of baptism: "At creation the Spirit hovered over the waters; they conceived and gave birth to reptiles, fishes and birds; the Holy Spirit hovered over the baptismal water and it gave birth to symbolic eagles—the virgins and leaders, and to symbolic fishes—the chaste and the intercessors, and to symbolic reptiles—the cunning who have become as simple as doves" (translation by Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 99). Although the authorship of the hymns on *Epiphany* is disputed, Rouwhorst, "Noyau le plus ancien," 157–158 maintains that hymn 8 belongs to the oldest nucleus of the collection and concludes that nothing prevents him from considering it as authentic. One may wonder, however, whether the above-established discrepancy between hymn 8 and Ephrem's undisputed writings would not argue against the authenticity of the former.

that Ephrem saw the deluge[263] and the crossing of the Red Sea[264] as prefigurations of baptism. Ferguson seems to be right, though, that these "common types of baptism in the early church … are little developed by Ephraem".[265]

One of Ephrem's most dominant images of baptism is the New Testament concept of 'new birth' (John 3:3–8).[266] He portrays the font as a live-giving 'womb' (ܟܪܣܐ/ܥܘܒܐ), that gives birth to the neophytes as infants: "they go down sordid with sin, they go up pure like infants, for baptism is a second womb for them".[267] The picture is maintained concerning the Eucharist: "Once this womb has given birth, the altar suckles and nurtures them: her children eat straight away, not milk, but perfect Bread!".[268] Albeit that the image of baptism as rebirth had already had a long history in Ephrem's time, it is interesting to note that he is credited with being the first to apply the term 'womb' to the baptismal water.[269]

When we also take into account the hymns on *Epiphany*, traditionally attributed to Ephrem but now disputed,[270] the amount of baptismal types increases abundantly for the obvious reason that these hymns have baptism as their special topic. Some Old Testament types are: the sweetening of the bitter waters by Moses,[271] the cloud and the crossing of the Red Sea,[272] the water that flowed from the rock,[273] and the three friends of Daniel in the oven.[274] Natural phenomena too are seen as types of baptism. We have already come across the image of pearl divers.[275] Other images used in the Epiphany hymns are the

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263 *On Faith* 49.4; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 34–35. In *On Virginity* 7.9 Ephrem makes a comparison between the flood and the oil.

264 Saber, "Typologie sacramentaire et baptismale," 81.

265 Ferguson, *Baptism*, 499.

266 Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 141 ff.; Bou Mansour, *Pensée symbolique*, 372 ff.; Beck, "Baptême", 116.

267 *On Virginity* 7.7; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191.

268 *On Virginity* 7.8; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191.

269 Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 103; Duncan, *Demonstrations of Aphraates*, 40. Ephrem was highly esteemed in both East and West. Many of his works were translated into Greek, possibly even during his lifetime (McVey, *Hymns*, 4; Brock, *Syriac Literature*, 30). Against this background, it does not seem unlikely that Theodore of Mopsuestia was also influenced by Ephrem. His use of 'womb', coined by Ephrem, may indicate such a scenario.

270 For some notes on authenticity, see p. 228n54 and p. 336n262.

271 *On Epiphany* 1.4; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 144; tr. ANF II/13, 265.

272 *On Epiphany* 1.5–6; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 144–145; tr. ANF II/13, 265. The cloud is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, which overshadows the baptizand in baptism.

273 *On Epiphany* 5.12–13; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 159; tr. ANF II/13, 273.

274 *On Epiphany* 8.5–6; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 169–170; tr. ANF II/13, 277. Baptism is compared here to an oven; the fire symbolises the Holy Spirit, mingled with the water.

275 See p. 269.

protection of bodily sweat,[276] and the vessel of sweet drinking water kept on a boat that sails on the sea.[277] Some New Testament images of baptism are seen in Jesus' saying to the Samaritan woman, "but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever" (John 4:14),[278] the washing of the blind man in the bath of Siloam,[279] and the catching of fish by Peter.[280,281]

Discussing the anointing in Ephrem above, it was already mentioned that the effects of initiation are caused by the communal rite of anointing-baptism.[282] With this in mind, we will have a closer look at some of the more important effects of baptism. To start with, an important effect of baptism is remission of sins.[283] This baptismal forgiveness of sins is only possible because it is founded on Jesus' atoning death on the cross, prefigured by the Old Testament sprinkling with hyssop.[284] Probably based upon his typological interpretation of John 19:34—with the blood and the water symbolising the Eucharist and baptism[285]—Ephrem portrays baptism as a washing by the blood of Christ.[286] Despite this strong relation between baptism and Jesus' suffering, however, it seems that Ephrem neither presents baptism as a dying and rising according to Romans 6, nor depicts the font as a tomb.[287]

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276   *On Epiphany* 7.16; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 165; tr. ANF II/13, 275. As sweat protects against fever, baptism protects against the flame of Gehenna.

277   *On Epiphany* 7.19; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 166; tr. ANF II/13, 276. The image is that of baptism (sweet water) in the flood of sin (sea).

278   *On Epiphany* 7.21; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 166; tr. ANF II/13, 276.

279   *On Epiphany* 7.22; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 166; tr. ANF II/13, 276.

280   *On Epiphany* 7.24–25; ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 167; tr. ANF II/13, 276. Peter's catching fish is likened to his 'catching' men by his preaching through baptism.

281   For a more extensive discussion of baptismal images in the Epiphany hymns, see Bou Mansour, *Pensée symbolique*, 353–377, Beck, *Taufe*, 125–163, and Ferguson, *Baptism*, 513–518.

282   See p. 268.

283   *On Virginity* 7.7; ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 190–191. Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 107–136; cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 509.

284   Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 132–134.

285   A popular source for typological interpretation in the Syrian tradition. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 107–114.

286   *On Virginity* 37.6 (ed. Beck, *Virginitate*, 134; tr. McVey, *Hymns*, 426); *On Virginity* 30.10 (ed. Beck, *Virginitate*, 112; tr. McVey, *Hymns*, 397). Cf. Beck, *Taufe*, 88; Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 108.

287   Beck, *Taufe*, 184–185; Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 96. Ephrem speaks of a 'baptism of the cross', but this refers to penitence and the Christian life and not to baptism as such (Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 133). Brock & Kiraz, 182 maintain that the phrase "he descends and buries (ܛܡܪ) himself in the water" (*On Virginity* 7.10; pp. 192–193) alludes to Rom. 6:4. Yet, although it is possible that Ephrem borrowed ܛܡܪ from Paul, it is noteworthy that he puts the verb in a completely different context. He portrays the baptizand as a pearl diver who "buries himself in the water" and "raises up from the deep a treasure of riches". (The term

Another important effect of baptism is renewal and regeneration. By baptismal birth, man becomes a new creation and is restored after the image of Christ and the Trinity.[288] In this way, baptism may be seen as a re-entry to paradise,[289] although the renewed state supersedes the original condition of Adam.[290] This is also where the typical Syrian clothing imagery recurs.[291] The neophyte disrobes himself of the old man—the garments of sin—and puts on the paradisal robe of glory,[292] i.e. 'Christ' or 'the Spirit'.[293] This robe of glory not only parallels the paradisal state of glory, but also the wedding garment, which the believer, as Christ's betrothed,[294] has to keep unsoiled until the eschatological wedding feast (Matt. 22:1–14).[295]

Ephrem leaves no doubt that it is not the water but the divine power that causes all baptismal benefits. Probably alluding to the Trinitarian baptismal formula, Ephrem makes it clear that "it is not the water of our atonement that cleanses us. Rather, it is the names pronounced over it which give us atone-

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used for the baptizand here, ܥܡܘܕܐ, has the double meaning of 'diver' and 'one to be baptized', see Payne Smith, 416b; no doubt the ambiguity is intended here, cf. Brock & Kiraz, 193n15.) Ephrem does nothing with Paul's concept of dying and rising with Christ. Nor does he present the water as a grave.

288   *On Virginity* 7.5 (ed. and tr. Brock & Kiraz, 188–189). Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 142 ff.; cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 512–513.

289   Already in the present (historical time), but fully to be realised at the future consummation (outside historical time). Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 96; idem, *Holy Spirit*, 64. See further: Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 62–65, 145–146; 145–146. Of special importance here is John 19:34, since the lance that pierced Christ's side is seen as the pendant of the flaming sword of Gen. 3:24 (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 113–114). The sword blocked the entrance of paradise, while the lance re-opened it.

290   Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 148; Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 64–65; idem, *Luminous Eye*, 100.

291   See n189 above.

292   *On Virginity* 1.1; ed. Beck, *Virginitate*, 1; tr. McVey, *Hymns*, 261. Cf. Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 85–97.

293   'Christ' and 'Spirit' are more or less interchangeable (Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 62). Compare "Descend my sealed brethren, put on our Lord" (*On Epiphany* 4.1; Beck, *Nativitate*, 154; tr. ANF II/13, 271) with "Descend, my brethren, put on from the waters of baptism the Holy Spirit" (*On Epiphany* 5.1; ed. Beck, Nativitate, 158; tr. ANF II/13, 272). Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 513; Bou Mansour, *Pensée symbolique*, 364.

294   Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 122–130. The bridal image is applied both to the Church and the individual believer.

295   Ibid., 94–97. For the individual, each Eucharist may be seen as a wedding feast when Christ, the Bridegroom, enters the body of the believer, the bridal chamber; the wedding feast of the collective Church is an eschatological happening (ibid., 125–126). When Ephrem further interiorises the image, "the bridal chamber is no longer located in the body, but in the heart, the very centre of the human person" (ibid., 127–128).

ment".[296] By the consecration of the water, the baptismal font becomes, in sacred time, the 'Jordan' which Christ sanctified at his own baptism.[297] At his baptism, Jesus mingled the Holy Spirit, often presented as fire, with the water in order that those being baptised might receive the gift of the Spirit from the water.[298] Although Christ and the Spirit may be seen as the 'main actors' in baptism,[299] it is worth noting here that Ephrem's approach is strongly Trinitarian.[300]

7.3.5   Apostolic Constitutions

The three accounts of baptism in the *Apostolic Constitutions* yield the following picture. Baptism is preceded by a period of fasting.[301] After the anointings, 'the priest' (ὁ ἱερεύς) glorifies God for his mighty deeds of salvation[302] and concludes with the following prayer for the blessing of the water:

> Look down from heaven, and sanctify this water, [and] give it grace and power, so that he who is to be baptized, according to the commandment of your Christ, may be crucified with him, and die with him, and be buried with him, and may rise with him, to be adopted in him, that he may die to sin and live to righteousness.[303]

It is noteworthy that the prayer is directed to the Father and that any reference to the Holy Spirit is lacking.[304] Instead, as we have seen above,[305] the conferring of the Holy Spirit is ritually connected to the pre-baptismal anointing of the head.

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296   *Commentary on Diatessaron* 16.29; ed. Leloir, *Évangile concordant* 1, 241 (Armenian)/2, 173–174 (Latin); tr. McCarthy, *Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, 259.

297   *On Virginity* 15.3 (ed. Beck, *Virginitate*, 52; tr. McVey, *Hymns*, 326); *On Virginity* 32.5 (ed. Beck, *Virginitate*, 118; tr. McVey, *Hymns*, 405). For the coming together of the Jordan and the baptismal water in sacred time, see Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 91–96.

298   *On Faith* 40.10 (ed. Beck, *Fide*, 132; tr. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 13); *Sermon on Our Lord* 53 (ed. Lamy, *Hymni et sermones*, I, cols. 267, 269; tr. Gwynn, *Hymns and Homilies*, 360); *Commentary on Diatessaron* 4.3 (ed. Leloir, *Évangile concordant* 1, 47 (Armenian)/2, 35 (Latin); tr. McCarthy, *Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron*, 85). Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 13–14; McDonnell, *Baptism of Jesus*, 137–138; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 503, 507, 511, 517; Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 69–72.

299   Saber, *Théologie Baptismale*, 140.

300   See above concerning the baptismal formula and see Ferguson, *Baptism*, 508.

301   *AC* VII,22:4–6; ed. Metzger, III, 48; tr. Grisbrooke, 66.

302   *AC* VII,43:1–4; ed. Metzger, III, 102; tr. Grisbrooke, 68–69.

303   *AC* VII,43:5; ed. Metzger, III, 104; tr. Grisbrooke, 69.

304   Cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 85.

305   See p. 272.

The ritual—administered by the bishop or presbyter[306]—is Trinitarian and consists of three immersions.[307] Although the exact formula is not given, the fact that the minister pronounced over the candidates the invocation of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit[308] makes us conjecture that it was declaratory and must have been identical with or similar to 'So-and-so is baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'.

In a passage concerning the respect due to the bishop, we read that:

> ... For by him the Lord has given you the Holy Spirit in the laying-on of hands, through him you have learned the holy doctrines, and have known God, and have believed in Christ, through him you have been known by God, and have believed in Christ [sic],[309] through him you have been sealed with the oil of gladness, and with the chrism of understanding, through him you have been made children of the light, through him at the moment of your enlightenment the Lord has sent forth his sacred voice on each and every one of you, by the testimony of the laying-on of the bishop's hands, saying 'You are my son, this day have I begotten you'.[310]

Ferguson[311] may be right that the second mention of a laying-on of hands, "at the moment of your enlightenment", concerns the water bath and not the anointing. This would agree with my earlier suggestion above with reference to

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306   In *AC* III,16:4 and VII,22:1 (for refs., see next footnote), it is said that both the 'bishop' (ἐπί-σκοπος) and the 'presbyter' (πρεσβύτερος) are allowed to baptise. The more general term 'priest' (ἱερεύς) used here may include both orders. Laymen, the lower clergy, and women are not allowed to baptise; see III,9–11 (ed. Metzger, II, 142, 144, 146).

307   That the ritual consisted of three immersions is clearly stated in canon 50: "If any bishop or presbyter does not perform three immersions [βαπτίσματα] of the one initiation [μυή-σεως], but one immersion [βάπτισμα] that is given unto the death of the Lord, let him be deprived. For the Lord did not say, 'Immerse [βαπτίσατε] into my death,' but 'Go and make disciples of all the nations, immersing [βαπτίζοντες] them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit'" (VIII,47:50; ed. Metzger, III, 290, 292; tr. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 567; additions between brackets are Ferguson's). Cf. III,16:4 (ed. Metzger, II, 156; tr. Gris-brooke, 64); VII,22,1 (ed. Metzger, III, 46; tr. Grisbrooke, 66); VII,44:1 (ed. Metzger, III, 104; tr. Grisbrooke, 69).

308   "... τὴν ἱερὰν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς εἰπὼν καὶ ἐπονομάσας ἐπίκλησιν Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ καὶ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ..." (III,16:4; ed. Metzger, II, 156; tr. Grisbrooke, 64).

309   The second "and have believed in Christ" is not found in the Greek text. It seems that Gris-brooke made a parablepsis here.

310   *AC* II,32:3; ed. Metzger, I, 252; tr. Grisbrooke, 63.

311   Ferguson, *Baptism*, 572.

the parallel passage in the *Didascalia*,[312] on which the *Constitutions* is dependent here, that, after the immersions, the minister laid his hands on the neophyte and recited Psalm 2:7.

After baptism, men are received by a deacon, women by a deaconess.[313] After having received the post-baptismal chrismation, the newly baptised stand up and, facing the East, pray the Lord's Prayer, followed by a concluding prayer for a pious life.[314]

Although the concept of 'new birth' is certainly not absent in the *Constitutions*—baptism is called e.g. the "bath of regeneration" (τοῦ λουτροῦ τῆς παλιγ-γενεσίας)[315]—and so is part of the theology of baptism, the image of 'dying and rising with Christ' functions as a mystagogical interpretation of the ritual itself. So, concerning the meaning of the different rituals, it says:

> Baptism, then, is given in the death of the Son, the water [is] in place of the entombment (ἀντὶ ταφῆς), the oil [is] in place of the Holy Spirit, the seal [is] in place of the cross, and the chrism confirms the confession … The descent [into the water is] the dying together [with Christ], the ascent [from the water is] the rising together [with him].[316]

And in the prayer for the blessing of the water, the priest bids that the baptizand:

> … may be crucified with him, and die with him, and be buried with him, and may rise with him, to be adopted in him, that he may die to sin and live to righteousness.[317]

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312   See p. 254n223 and p. 330.

313   *AC* III,16:4; ed. Metzger, II, 156; tr. Grisbrooke, 64.

314   *AC* VII,45:1–3; ed. Metzger, III, 106; tr. Grisbrooke, 70. Cf. III,18:1–2; ed. Metzger, II, 158, 160; tr. Grisbrooke, 65.

315   *AC* VII,39:4; ed. Metzger, III, 94. See further: "the bath of life" (τὸ τῆς ζωῆς λουτρὸν) (II,7:2; ed. Metzger, I,160); "the baptism of regeneration" (τὸ βάπτισμα τῆς παλιγγενεσίας) is a "type" (τύπον) of the cross (VII,43:3; ed. Metzger, III, 102); "who [the bishop] has begotten you again to adoption by water and Spirit" (δι᾽ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος ἀναγεννήσας ὑμᾶς εἰς υἱο-θεσίαν) (II,26:4; ed. Metzger, I,238; my own translation); "the spiritual regeneration" (τὴν πνευματικὴν ἀναγέννησιν) (VIII,8:5; ed. Metzger, III,160).

316   *AC* III,17:1–3; ed. Metzger, II, 158; tr. Grisbrooke, 64.

317   *AC* VII,43:5; ed. Metzger, III, 104; tr. Grisbrooke, 69. See further: VII,22:2–3 (ed. Metzger, III, 48; tr. Grisbrooke, 66); VII,22:6 (ed. Metzger, *iques* III, 48; tr. Grisbrooke, 66); VII,44:2 (ed. Metzger, III, 104; tr. Grisbrooke, 69).

Having died to sin, the newly baptised has to pursue a holy life.[318] Besides forgiveness of sins, baptism effects regeneration and adoption in Christ,[319] cleansing, sanctification, and enlightenment.[320]

7.3.6   *John Chrysostom*

His *Baptismal Instructions* attest baptism at the Easter Vigil.[321] After the anointing and stripping,[322] the baptizand enters the font.[323] The bishop (ἀρχιερεύς)[324] imposes his right hand on the candidate's head and immerses him three times[325] while reciting the baptismal formula, "So-and-so is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Βαπτίζεται ὁ δεῖναι εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος)".[326] Having been initiated, the neophyte is received into the community with a kiss and celebrates his first communion.[327] In his commentary on Colossians, written during his patriarchate in Constantinople, Chrysostom mentions the reciting of the Our Father right after baptism.[328] But the Antiochene *Baptismal Instructions* are silent on the matter. Albeit that the ritual vesting with the baptismal garment

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318   *AC* II,7:1–2; ed. Metzger, I, 160.

319   Regeneration and adoption are closely related concepts, see e.g. "who [the bishop, NW] has begotten you again to adoption by water and Spirit" (II,26:4; ed. Metzger, I,238; my own translation), and "… be counted worthy of 'the bath of regeneration' [Titus 3:5] 'to the adoption in Christ' [Eph. 1:5]" VII,39:4 (ed. Metzger, III, 94; tr. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 570; additions between brackets are his).

320   *AC* VII,39:4 (ed. Metzger, III, 94; tr. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 570); VIII,8:5 (ed. Metzger, III, 160; tr. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 571).

321   *PK* 1.11, 2.5–7; ed. Kaczynski, I, 160 (= 2/1,7), 200, 202 (=2/2,3); tr. Harkins, 135, 150. Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 48–49.

322   See comment in Chapter 6, n347.

323   Finn, *Liturgy of baptism*, 149–152 contends that, besides the *redditio symboli*, the rite contained a baptismal profession of faith in the form of a question-answer dialogue, which occurred right before entering the water. He further asserts that "[i]t was unquestionably the Antioch baptismal creed", which was "substantially, if not identically, the same creed upon which Theodore of Mopsuestia comments in his *Baptismal Instructions*." (p. 151; but see *BS*, 24–35). Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 539.

324   *PK* 3.31 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 250 (= 2/3,9); tr. Harkins, 171). See also *Stav.* 2.10 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 340 (= 3/2,10); tr. Harkins, 47) where both ἱερεύς and ἀρχιερεύς are used for the bishop. Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 167–169. The bishop was assisted by priests. Although no deacons and deaconesses are mentioned, Finn presumes their presence referring to the *Didascalia*.

325   Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 157–158.

326   *PK* 3.14; ed. Kaczynski, I, 236 (= 2/3,3); tr. Harkins, 165. Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 169–174.

327   *Stav.* 2.27; ed. Kaczynski, II, 354 (= 3/2, 27); tr. Harkins, 53. Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 197–207.

328   *Homilies on the Epistle to the Colossians* 6, see Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 187.

itself is not described by Chrysostom, his reflection on the symbolism of the robe leaves no doubt that such a ritual existed.[329] It is possible that the newly baptised received a lighted candle, indicating their spiritual illumination.[330]

Although the blessing of the water is not explicitly mentioned, its presence may be inferred from Chrysostom's speaking of "sacred waters"[331] and the way he relates the Spirit to the water as in: "For it is not a man who does what is done, but it is the grace of the Spirit which sanctifies the nature of the water and touches your head together with the hand of the priest".[332] The reason Chrysostom does not elaborate on the ritual may be that he informs the catechumens only about the rituals they will participate in, and the sanctification of the water was usually not witnessed by the candidates.[333]

Throughout his *Instructions*, he gives great prominence to the concepts of death/resurrection[334] and rebirth, portraying the font both as a tomb[335] and a womb. To start with the former, the immersion and emersion signify a dying and rising with Christ: "Baptism is a burial and a resurrection. For the old man is buried with his sin and the new man is resurrected *being renewed according to the image of his Creator*".[336] Chrysostom explains that this dying is "in

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329   E.g.: "Now the robe you wear and your gleaming garments attract the eyes of all …" (*Stav.* 4.18; ed. Kaczynski, II, 372 (= 3/3,18); tr. Harkins, 73) and "Your shining robe now arouses admiration in the eyes of all who behold you, and the radiance of your garments proves that the souls are free from every blemish" (*Stav.* 7.24; ed. Kaczynski, II, 452 (= 3/6,24); tr. Harkins, 114). Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 191–197; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 543.

330   Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 190–191.

331   τὰ ἱερὰ νάματα (*Stav.* 2.25, 27; ed. Kaczynski, II, 352, 354 (= 3/2,25, 27); tr. Harkins, 52–53); τῶν ἁγίων ὑδάτων (*PK* 3.28; ed. Kaczynski, I, 248 (= 2/3,2); tr. Harkins, 170).

332   *Stav.* 2.10; ed. Kaczynski, II, 340 (= 3/2,10); tr. Harkins, 47. The connection of the Spirit to the water suggests an epiclesis of the Holy Spirit (Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 154–157; cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 87).

333   Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 156; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 147n13; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 541. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 156–157 also considers the possibility that Chrysostom is silent on the matter, since the water had already been blessed on the Feast of Epiphany. But cf. Talley, *Liturgical Year*, 125–126.

334   Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 158–162; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 261–279. Quite surprisingly, Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 86 maintains that a "Romans 6 death-resurrection typology is absent" in Chrysostom.

335   In his *Baptismal Instructions*, Chrysostom employs both 'tomb' (ὁ τάφος, see *Stav.* 2.11; ed. Kaczynski, II, 340 (= 3/2, 11); tr. Harkins, 47), and 'burial' (ἡ ταφή, see *PK* 1.12 ed. Kaczynski, I, 162 (= 2/1,8); tr. Harkins, 135). Therefore, Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 158 errs when he states that Chrysostom does not use 'tomb' in his *Instructions*, but only in other writings.

336   *Stav.* 2.11; ed. Kaczynski, II, 340 (= 3/2, 11); tr. Harkins, 47. Cf. *PK* 2.7 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 202 (= 2/2,3); tr. Harkins, 150); *Stav.* 2.29 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 354, 356 (= 3/2, 29); tr. Harkins, 54); *PK* 2.11 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 206 (= 2/2,4); tr. Harkins, 152).

the likeness of His death",[337] meaning that the candidate does not physically die, like Christ, but dies to sin and so becomes crucified to this present sinful world.[338] The candidate does not only identify with Christ's death, however, but also shares in his new life of the resurrection. In this sense, the dying in baptism is not a sad, but a joyful event.[339] As baptism is a burial of "the old man" and a raising up of "the new, who is renewed in the image of his creator",[340] the images of death/resurrection and rebirth/re-creation are closely related and easily combined. Concerning the latter, Chrysostom likens the Church to a mother and the neophytes to her children: "See how many children this spiritual mother has brought forth suddenly and in a single night!".[341] In order to help the catechumens to accept the invisible mystery of the baptismal birth, Chrysostom compares it to the visible mystery of the virginal birth. Both remain unfathomable and can only be accepted by faith.[342] The image is extended to the Eucharist, which is portrayed as the nourishment for infants.[343]

To express the idea of new birth, Chrysostom prefers the term 'bath of regeneration' (λουτρὸν παλιγγενεσίας)[344] over alternatives like 'womb' and 'birth'.[345]

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337 *PK* 2.10; ed. Kaczynski, I, 206 (= 2/2,4); tr. Harkins, 152. Cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 160; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 273–275.

338 *Stav.* 7.20–22; ed. Kaczynski, II, 448, 450, 452 (= 3/6,20–22); tr. Harkins, 112–113. In order to fortify the Pauline teaching of the dying to sin by baptism, Chrysostom delivered this homily at the tombs of the martyrs. Chrysostom puts much emphasis on the practical consequences of being dead to sin. Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 263–271.

339 *PK* 2.11; ed. Kaczynski, I, 206 (= 2/2,5); tr. Harkins, 152.

340 *Stav.* 2.25; ed. Kaczynski, II, 352 (= 3/2, 25); tr. Harkins, 52. Cf. *Finn, Liturgy of Baptism*, 162.

341 *Stav.* 4.1; ed. Kaczynski, II, 358 (= 3/3,1); tr. Harkins, 66. Cf. *PK* 1.5, 11. Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 317–318.

342 *PK* 3.16–17; ed. Kaczynski, I, 238 (= 2/3,3); tr. Harkins, 165–166. Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 318–320; Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 162.

343 *Stav.* 3.19; ed. Kaczynski, I, 276 (= 2/4,19); tr. Harkins, 62.

344 Borrowed from Titus 3:5. See *Stav.* 3.17 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 274 (= 2/4,17); tr. Harkins, 62); *Stav.* 3.23 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 282 (= 2/4,23); tr. Harkins, 63); *PK* 1.12 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 162 (= 2/1,8); tr. Harkins, 135); *PK* 1.26 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 174 (= 2/1,15); tr. Harkins, 140). Explaining why 'bath of regeneration' is an appropriate name for Christian baptism, he says: "And why, someone will say, if the bath takes away all our sins, is it not called the bath of the remission of sins, or the bath of cleansing, rather than the bath of regeneration? The reason is that it does not simply remit our sins, nor does it simply cleanse us of our faults, but it does this just as if we were born anew. For it does create us anew and it fashions us again, not molding us from earth, but creating us from a different element, the nature of water" (*PK* 1.20; ed. Kaczynski, I, 170 (= 2/1,12); tr. Harkins, 138). He uses ἀναγεννήσεως in *Stav.* 1.17 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 306 (= 3/1,17); tr. Harkins, 29). John 3:5 is less frequently attested. One of the few examples is found in *PK* 3.29 where he speaks of "the regeneration that comes from the water and the Spirit" (ed. Kaczynski, I, 248 (= 2/3,8); tr. Harkins, 170).

345 The term 'womb' is never used (cf. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 163). 'Birth'/'to be born' with

As it provokes a thorough cleansing of both body and soul, this Christian 'bath of regeneration' surpasses the Greek baths and the Jewish lustrations, which yield only an imperfect and partial purification.[346] To illustrate the radical renewal through the 'bath of regeneration', Chrysostom not only employs the illustration of the potter (Jer. 18),[347] similar to Theodore, but also pictures baptism as a furnace in which, like metals, the rusted nature of man is melted, purged and renewed by the fire of the Holy Spirit.[348]

Another key image in Chrysostom's *Baptismal Instructions* is that of baptism as a spiritual marriage, based on Eph. 5:25–27, with Christ as the bridegroom and the Church/baptizand as the bride.[349] In this metaphor, baptism, the bath of regeneration, signifies the bridal bath in which the Bridegroom cleanses His bride by His own blood.[350] Referring to the piercing of Christ's side (John 19:34), Chrysostom explains that the cross is the source of the sanctifying blood and the spiritual marriage. The water and blood[351] that came out symbolise baptism and the Eucharist. Since "the Church is sprung through the bath of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit, through baptism and the mysteries", and both "come from the side of Christ", Chrysostom concludes that the Church is ultimately formed from the side of Christ, as Eve was shaped from the side of Adam.[352] By baptism, the individual candidate becomes a member of the Church and so participates in the bridal relationship with Christ.[353] Chrysostom further develops the image by portraying the baptismal garment, which is Christ himself, as the bridal robe.[354]

The latter brings us to both the clothing imagery and the symbolism of clothing. By his stripping before the water bath, the initiand symbolically removes

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reference to baptism occurs in *Stav*. 3.7 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 260 (= 2/4,7); tr. Harkins, 58), *PK* 1.1 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 152 (= 2/1,1); tr. Harkins, 131), and *PK* 1.20 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 170 (= 2/1,12); tr. Harkins, 138).

346   *PK* 1.13–20; ed. Kaczynski, I, 164, 166, 168, 170 (= 2/1,9–12); tr. Harkins, 136–138.

347   *PK* 1.23–26; ed. Kaczynski, I, 172, 174 (= 2/1,14–15); tr. Harkins, 139–140.

348   *PK* 1.21–22; ed. Kaczynski, I, 170, 172 (= 2/1,12–13); tr. Harkins, 138–139.

349   *Stav*. 1.1–18 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 292, 294, 296, 298, 300, 302, 304, 306 (= 3/1,1–18); tr. Harkins, 23–30); *Stav*. 6.24–25 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 432 (= 3/5,24–25); tr. Harkins, 103). *PK* 3.1–10 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 228, 230, 232, 234 (= 2/3,1–2); tr. Harkins, 161–164). Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 314–317; Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 165–166.

350   *Stav*. 1.17–18; ed. Kaczynski, II, 306 (= 3/1,17–18); tr. Harkins, 29–30. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 314–315.

351   Chrysostom inverts the order "blood and water". Cf. Harkins, 236n31.

352   *Stav*. 3.17; ed. Kaczynski, I, 274 (= 2/4,17); tr. Harkins, 62.

353   Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 166.

354   *PK* 3.6–10; ed. Kaczynski, I, 232, 234 (= 2/3,2); tr. Harkins, 162–164. Cf. *Stav*. 6.24; ed. Kaczynski, II, 432 (= 3/5,24); tr. Harkins, 103.

the garment of sin and shame and so returns to paradisal innocence.[355] As the pendant of this act the neophyte is vested after baptism with the *tunica alba*, the baptismal garment. This physical robe is a symbol of the spiritual robe, also called 'royal robe' or 'bridal robe', and signifies that the newly-baptised has put on Christ.[356] Probably elaborating on the bright and shining baptismal garment, Chrysostom portrays the neophytes as "spiritual stars, which rival the sun itself and even far surpass it", shining night and day.[357] The pastorally concerned mystagogue especially exhorts his listeners to keep their new robe shining by leading a life of devotion.

The effects of baptism are nicely summarised by Chrysostom in *Stav*. 3.[358] Having been baptised, the neophytes are free (of captivity and sins), holy, just, sons, heirs, brothers of Christ, joint heirs, members, and both the temple and instruments of the Spirit. Because this tenfold gift of baptism is much more than forgiveness of sins, Chrysostom contends, it is appropriate also to baptise infants.[359] Although they are sinless, they have need of the other benefits of baptism.

Chrysostom puts much emphasis on the divine nature of baptism. Both the passive character of the baptismal formula and the imposition of the hand—ultimately the hand of Christ or God—indicate that it is Christ or the Trinity that baptises; the bishop is just an instrument.[360] The imposition of the hand

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355 *PK* 3.28; ed. Kaczynski, I, 248 (= 2/3,2); tr. Harkins, 170. Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 148; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 262. Nevertheless, baptism far exceeds the garden of Paradise. Instead of the serpent, beautiful trees and fruits and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, there are Christ, spiritual favours, and grace and gifts (*PK* 3.29; idem).

356 *Stav*. 2.19 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 348 (= 3/2, 19); tr. Harkins, 50). *Stav*. 4.3–4, 4.11–12, 18, 22–23, 27 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 358, 360, 366, 368, 372, 374, 376, 380 (= 3/3,3–4, 11–12, 18, 22–23, 27); tr. Harkins, 66–67, 70–71, 73, 74–75, 76). *Stav*. 5.18, 24 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 402, 408 (= 3/4,18, 24); tr. Harkins, 88, 90). *Stav*. 6.24 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 432 (= 3/5,24); tr. Harkins, 103). *Stav*. 7.24–25, 27, 31 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 452, 454, 456, 460 (= 3/6,24–25, 27, 31); tr. Harkins, 114, 115, 117.). *PK* 1.3 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 154 (= 2/1,2); tr. Harkins, 132). *PK* 3.6–10 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 232, 234 (= 2/3,2); tr. Harkins, 162–163).

357 *Stav*. 4.3; ed. Kaczynski, II, 360 (= 3/3,3); tr. Harkins, 67.

358 *Stav*. 3.5; ed. Kaczynski, I, 258 (= 2/4,5); tr. Harkins, 57. Cf. *PK* 1.18 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 168 (= 2/1,11); tr. Harkins, 137); *MF* 2.6 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 114 (= 1,3); tr. Harkins, 175).

359 *Stav*. 3.6; ed. Kaczynski, I, 258, 260 (= 2/4,6); tr. Harkins, 57.

360 *Stav*. 2.25–26 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 352 (= 3/2,25–26); tr. Harkins, 52–53); *PK* 3.12–14 (ed. Kaczynski, I, 234, 236 (= 2/3,3); tr. Harkins, 164–165). Cf. *Stav*. 2.10 (ed. Kaczynski, II, 340 (= 3/2, 10); tr. Harkins, 47). Trinitarian baptism is patterned after the baptism of the Son, whose body was baptised "by the Word, and by the voice of His Father from heaven which said: *This is my beloved Son*, and by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit which descended upon Him" (*PK* 3.12; ed. Kaczynski, I, 236 (= 2/3,3); tr. Harkins, 164–165, his italics). Finn, *Liturgy of Baptism*, 169–181. Finn (pp. 176–177) argues that Chrysostom's emphasis on the

further indicates that the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon the candidate through the bishop. Chrysostom ritually connects the conferring of the Spirit to the immersions.

7.3.7 *Jerusalem*

Although Cyril's *Baptismal Catecheses* are silent on the matter, the *Mystagogical Catecheses* written later explicitly mention the stripping and nakedness of the candidates. It is said that they took off their tunic and "were naked in the eyes of all and felt no shame".[361]

Concerning the preparation of the water and the immersions, the Jerusalem sources show a somewhat diverse picture.[362] In the *Baptismal Catecheses*, the water is consecrated by an invocation of the Trinity. Cyril explains that the baptismal water is not just "ordinary water", for when it "receives the invocation of the Holy Spirit and Christ and the Father, it acquires the power of holiness".[363] It is notable that the usual order of Father-Son-Spirit is reversed here. Could it be that, though Trinitarian in shape, the prayer actually concerned an epiclesis of the Holy Spirit?[364] This would agree with the role of the Holy Spirit in the rite as presented in the *Baptismal Catecheses* in general.[365] It is especially the Spirit who is related to and active in the water and the immersions. Appealing to John 3:5, Cyril states that the "water cleanses the body, and the Spirit seals the soul". He further says that salvation is effected "by the power of the Holy Spirit"[366] and that "the Holy Spirit baptizes the soul".[367] As in the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit will descend on the candidate as a sign of filial adoption.[368]

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secondary role of the minister must be sought in the then-current controversies concerning the validity of baptism by heretics and sinful ministers. Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 543.

361   *MC* 2.2; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 112; tr. Yarnold, 173.

362   I follow here the critical analysis of Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 80–84, 94–96. She points out that "the conflation of the Jerusalem sources to produce a harmonized initiation rite for this see fails to take account of the theological and liturgical developments to which the texts bear witness" (p. 83).

363   *Cats*. 3.3; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 428–429; tr. Yarnold, 90.

364   Cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 81 who suggests that "each invocation of a divine person was accompanied by a petition: for example, that the Spirit would descend and seal (*Cats*. 3.3–4); that the candidate might receive the fruits of Christ's passion (*Cats*. 3.10–12); that the Father would give the grace of adoption (*Cats*. 3.14)".

365   For a discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in Cyril's rite, see Ferguson, *Baptism*, 484–486.

366   *Cats*. 3.4; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 429, 432; tr. Yarnold, 90.

367   *Cats*. 17.14; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 985; tr. McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 2, 105.

368   3.14; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 444–445; tr. Yarnold, 94–95.

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The only indications in the *Procatechesis* that the rite contained a consecra-tion of the water of some sort are the term "Christ-bearing waters"[369] and the warning towards the candidate that if he persists in his ill will, the "water will receive you, but the Spirit will not".[370] However, this little information makes every proposal concerning the nature of the blessing and the exact form of the consecratory prayer highly speculative.[371]

The *Mystagogical Catecheses* also do not say much about the blessing of the water, although phrases like "that saving water"[372] and "the holy waters of the font"[373] seem to presuppose such a ritual. As the reception of the Spirit is rit-ually connected to the post-baptismal chrismation, it seems unlikely that the blessing contained an epiclesis of the Holy Spirit.[374]

Both the *Baptismal Catecheses* and the *Mystagogical Catecheses* attest full immersion.[375] In the former, Cyril alludes to a Trinitarian formula when he says

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369   15; ed. Cross, 9; tr. Yarnold, 85.

370   4; ed. Cross, 3; tr. Yarnold, 80–81.

371   Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 82 maintains that in the *Procatechesis* the water effects only "adoption by Christ and thus any prayer may well have contained a clause to that effect, even if there was still a Trinitarian epiklesis". She puts much emphasis on the term 'Christ-bearing waters' and contends that the reference to the Spirit does not necessarily refer to a Spirit epiclesis and may be seen as "a standard warning against being baptized with impure intentions". Day reacts here to McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 1, 74n17 who con-clude that "Cyril seems to attribute the reception of the Spirit to water [*sic*]". According to Day, this is based "upon a questionable conflation of *Procat.* and *MC*". However, Day is mistaken here since Stephenson does not conflate the *Procatechesis* and the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, but the *Procatechesis* and Cyril's *Baptismal Catecheses* (!). Stephenson further ascertains that the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, contrary to the *Baptismal Catecheses*, ritually connect the bestowal of the Spirit to the post-baptismal chrismation and states, in agree-ment with Day, that it is "impossible to harmonize the two works on this point". Quasten, "Blessing," 310 contends that the term 'Christ-bearing waters' suggests that the consecra-tory prayer of the *Procatechesis* must have been similar to that of the rite of Serapion. Although this prayer is basically Trinitarian, the Logos is implored to descend upon the waters. Interestingly, in the same prayer God is asked to "look upon these waters and fill them with holy Spirit". We see, then, that a Trinitarian prayer does not exclude the specific connection of the Logos (or Son) and/or the Spirit with the water. On the contrary, as the sources make clear, it seems to be the rule rather than the exception.

372   *MC* 2.4; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 116; tr. Yarnold, 174.

373   *MC* 3.1; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 124; tr. Yarnold, 176.

374   Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 82–83 sharply observes that "*MC* … uses almost identi-cal terms to warn candidates about mistaking the nature of consecrated oil as those given in *Cats*. 3.3 about the water; no such warnings about the water are given. This would seem to indicate that as the function of the immersion in the rite had changed so also had the manner in which the water was prepared".

375   "… you were immersed in the water and came up from it again. There in the font you sym-bolically re-enacted Christ's three-day burial. For just as our Saviour spent three days and

that "we are baptized into Father, Son and Holy Spirit".[376] The formula itself and the exact performance of the ritual remain unclear however.[377] The *Mystagogical Catecheses* are equally reticent on the matter and mention only that the initiands were asked if they "believed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit",[378] which hints at some sort of baptismal interrogation.[379]

After baptism, the neophytes were anointed[380] and participated in their first Eucharist. Neither the *Procatechesis*, nor the *Baptismal Catecheses*, nor the *Mystagogical Catecheses* clearly mentions the vesting with the white baptismal garment, although some passages seem to allude to it.[381]

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three nights in the heart of the earth, so too when you came up the first time you were imitating Christ's first day in the earth and when you submerged his first night. A man in the dark can no longer see, but during the day a man lives in the light; so too when you submerged you could see nothing, as if it were night, but when you came up again it was as if you were in daylight" (*MC* 2.4; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 114, 116; tr. Yarnold, 174). Cf. *Cats*. 3.12 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 441, 444; tr. Yarnold, 94); *Cats*. 17.14 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 985; tr. McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 2, 105). Cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 94–95.

376   *Cats*. 16.19; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 945; tr. McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 2, 88. Cf. *Cats*. 16.4 where Cyril, referring to Matt. 28:29, says the Holy Spirit "is honored with Father and Son, and on the occasion of holy Baptism is included with them in the Holy Trinity" (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 921; tr. McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 2, 77).

377   For the possibility of a laying-on of hands during the ritual, see Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 143–145.

378   *MC* 2.4; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 116; tr. Yarnold, 174.

379   Cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 95–96, who offers two speculative reasons for the apparent repetition of the adherence in interrogatory form. According to the first, the Trinitarian confession would be repeated because the minister—in case of the bishop— would not have witnessed the preceding recitation of the creed or the *syntaxis*. According to the second, the introduction of the interrogatory form would have been a reaction to the shift of the (former) Trinitarian baptismal formula to the adherence in order to balance the fourfold formula of the renunciation.

380   At least according to the *Mystagogical Catecheses*. See p. 275 ff.

381   In a passage which seems to present a rough chronological picture of the rite, the *Procatechesis* says about the neophytes: "… like the stars of the Church, you will come in with your bodies shining and your souls radiant" (*Procat*. 15; ed. Cross, 10; tr. Yarnold, 85). In the *Baptismal Catecheses*, after having mentioned the washing with water, Cyril quotes Cant. 8:5, saying: "Who is she who comes up clothed in white and leaning on her kinsman?" (*Cats*. 3.16; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 447; tr. Yarnold, 95–96). And in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* we read: "Now that you have taken off your old garments and put on ones that are spiritually white, you must wear white always. Of course, I do not mean that you must always be dressed in white garments, but that you must always be dressed in garments that are truly white and shining and spiritual …" (*MC* 4.8; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 142; tr. Yarnold, 180–181). Egeria only mentions that the neophytes were 'clothed' (*vestiti*) and does not say anything about the nature of the dress (*It*. 38.1; ed. Röwekamp, *Itinerarium*, 278; tr. Wilkinson, *Ege-*

As for the mystagogy, the stripping is interpreted in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* in terms of the Pauline image of "putting off the old man with his deeds".[382] The pendant of this ritual would be the vesting with the baptismal garment, but there is no clear mystagogy of this ritual. Nevertheless, the clothing imagery recurs a few times, e.g. when it is said to the neophytes that "having put off the old man, you mourn no longer; having put on Jesus Christ, 'the robe of salvation', you are in festal mood'".[383]

The nakedness itself is interpreted in a twofold way in the *Mystagogical Catecheses*. Being naked, the candidate is imitating both "Christ naked on the cross" and "the first man Adam, who was 'naked' in paradise 'but not ashamed'".[384] The latter idea of baptism as a return (gate) to paradise is also attested in the *Procatechesis* and the *Baptismal Catecheses*.[385]

The importance of water is elucidated in the *Baptismal Catecheses* by some Old Testament examples like the creation story, the flood, and the deliverance from Egypt through the Red Sea.[386] The symbolism of the crossing of the Red Sea recurs more elaborately in the *Mystagogical Catecheses* in which Moses signifies Jesus, the blood on the doorposts the blood of Jesus and the drowning of the pharaoh the defeat of the Devil through the water of baptism.[387] In *Cats.* 3.11, Cyril uses the image of Christ conquering the Serpent in the water.[388]

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    ria's Travels, 157). Cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 121–124; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 349–350; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 481.

382   *MC* 2.2 (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 112; tr. Yarnold, 173); cf. *Cats.* 1.2; Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 162–165.

383   *MC* 1.10 (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 108; tr. Yarnold, 172); cf. *Cats.* 3.2 where Isa. 61:10 (LXX) is quoted: "Rejoice, my soul, in the Lord, for he has dressed me in the robe of salvation and the tunic of joy; he has bound on me the diadem of a bridegroom, and adorned me with jewels as a bride" (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 428; tr. Yarnold, 90). Cyril employs clothing imagery several other times, but does not do so concerning baptism itself. In *Cats.* 3.1–3, he uses the bridal image with Christ as the bridegroom and the catechumen as the bride. As a preparation for the wedding, the bride has to wash her garment and put on the "wedding-garment" (*Cats.* 3:2; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 425, 428; tr. Yarnold, 89). This time, however, the image concerns the spiritual preparation through repentance (cf. *Procat.* 4).

384   *MC* 2.2 (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 112; tr. Yarnold, 173); cf. *MC* 1.1, 1.9. Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 173–179.

385   *Procat.* 15 (ed. Cross, 9; tr. Yarnold, 85); *Cats.* 1.4 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 373; tr. McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 1, 93). Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 181; Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 67.

386   *Cats.* 3.5 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 432–433; tr. Yarnold, 91). Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 482.

387   *MC.* 1.2–3; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 96, 98; tr. Yarnold, 169–170.

388   Ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 441; tr. Yarnold, 94.

Cyril presents different interpretations of the flowing of blood and water from the side of Jesus on the cross.[389] According to one of them, the water signifies the usual baptism by water in times of peace, while the blood symbolises the baptism of martyrs in their own blood during times of persecution.

The mystagogy of the water rite is chiefly found in the *Mystagogical Catecheses*. The dominant baptismal image here is that of dying with Christ (Rom. 6). The pool symbolises the tomb and the three immersions are likened to Christ's three-day burial; each immersion signifies a night and each emersion a day.[390] Undoubtedly, the author gratefully exploits the advantage of the location, since the candidates were baptised right before the tomb where Christ was supposed to have been buried.[391] As an extension of the image of dying with Christ, one would expect the climbing out of the font to be paralleled with the resurrection, but, somewhat surprisingly, this symbolism is absent.[392] Riley conjectures that the reason for this may be that the author is particularly concerned "with the neophyte's relationship to the sufferings of Christ, and just how the efficacy of the cross is present in the baptismal rite".[393] Indeed, the author of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* puts much emphasis on this issue. In a somewhat polemical way, he asserts that baptism does not merely effect remission of sins or adoption, but that it also forms "the counterpart of Christ's sufferings".[394] The author further explains that, while the communion with Christ's suffering is only in

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389   *Cats.* 13.21 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 797, 800; tr. Yarnold, 154). Cf. *Cats.* 3.10 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 440–441; tr. Yarnold, 93).

390   *MC* 2.4; (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 114, 116; tr. Yarnold, 174). It is notable that the more usual Trinitarian interpretation is fully absent here.

391   "After this you were led to the holy pool of sacred baptism, just as Christ was taken from the cross to the tomb which stands before you" (*MC* 2.4; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 114; tr. Yarnold, 174). Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 228; Ferguson, *Baptism*, 482.

392   Cf. Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 232–233. In *Procat.* 2 Cyril says concerning Simon Magus: "As far as his body was concerned, he went down into the water and came up from it; but his soul was not buried with Christ or raised with him" (ed. Cross, 1; tr. Yarnold, 79; cf. *Procat.* 5: "For you have to die and rise again"; ed. Cross, 4; tr. Yarnold, 81). And in *Cats.* 3.12 he encourages his audience, with an appeal to Rom. 6:4, that they "will be raised again to 'walk in newness of life'" (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 441, 444; tr. Yarnold, 94). Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 233 seems right in saying that in these passages also "a specific reference to coming out of the baptismal pool in concrete mystagogical terms as a symbol of rising from the tomb, is not unequivocally present, and the passages might be said to hover between theological explanation of a salvific event and mystagogical interpretation of an [*sic*] concrete liturgical action, the coming out of the pool associated with the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb".

393   *Christian Initiation*, 234.

394   *MC* 2.6 (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 118; tr. Yarnold, 174–175). Cf. Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 83.

imitation, the salvation is real.[395] Although Riley is certainly right, then, that the author's main concern is to elucidate the baptizand's relationship to the sufferings of Christ, I doubt whether this satisfactorily explains the absence of the mystagogy of the rising from the pool as an image of the resurrection. It is my impression that this omission is better explained by the author's portrayal of the font as both 'tomb' and 'mother'.[396] On the same occasion, the neophyte both dies and is born.[397] In this way, the spiritual birth becomes the counterpart of dying with Christ, which leaves no room for the image of the resurrection.

In general agreement with the *Baptismal Catecheses* and the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, *Procatechesis* 16 provides a nice summary of the meaning and effects of baptism:

> The baptism which lies before you is a matter of great importance. For prisoners it means ransom; for sins forgiveness;[398] the death of sin; new birth for the soul;[399] a shining garment; a holy, indelible seal;[400] a chariot to heaven; the food of paradise; the grant of royalty; the grace of adoption.[401,402]

We may add a few notes to this. Concerning filial adoption, Cyril points out that, unlike Christ, the neophyte does "not possess sonship by nature".[403] Therefore, when the Holy Spirit descends on the baptizand, God's voice does not say "'This person is my son', but 'This person has now become my son'". Because of the

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395 Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 234–241 offers a critical analysis of the way the author of the *Mystagogical Catecheses* portrays the relation between the salvation conferred by baptism and the suffering of Christ.

396 *MC* 2.4; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 116; tr. Yarnold, 174. Regeneration is also present, but less developed (Ferguson, *Baptism*, 484).

397 *MC* 2.4; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 116; tr. Yarnold, 174. The author appeals to Eccles. 3:2 which says that there is "a time to be born, and a time to die". Interestingly, the natural order of birth-death is reversed in baptism, which underscores the creative force of the ritual (Riley, *Christian Initiation*, 302–304).

398 Cf. *Cats*. 3.12 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 441, 444; tr. Yarnold, 94), *Cats*. 3.15 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 445, 448; tr. Yarnold, 95), *Cats*. 3.16 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 448–449; tr. Yarnold, 95–96); *Cats*. 18.33 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 1056; tr. Yarnold, 167–168); *MC* 2.6 (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 118; tr. Yarnold, 174–175).

399 Cf. *Cats*. 1.2 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 372; tr. McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 1, 92). For this image in the *Mystagogical Catecheses*, see above.

400 Cf. *Cats*. 3.4 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 432; tr. Yarnold, 90); *Cats*. 18.32 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 1053, 1056; tr. Yarnold, 167).

401 Cf. *MC* 2.6 (ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 118; tr. Yarnold, 174–175) and see the discussion below.

402 *Procat*. 16; ed. Cross, 10; tr. Yarnold, 85.

403 *Cats*. 3.14; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 444–445; tr. Yarnold, 94–95.

direct relation between adoption and the reception of the Spirit, the *Mystagogical Catecheses* do not connect adoption to the water but to the post-baptismal chrismation.[404]

Cyril often identifies baptism with 'grace' (χάρις).[405] So, he speaks of "the grace of God, which is given through Christ, in the regeneration of Baptism".[406] Other examples are: "the grace is given through the water",[407] "the grace of baptism",[408] and his remark that the baptised share in "divine grace".[409]

As a reference to the cleansing aspect of baptism, Cyril frequently employs the term λουτρόν ('washing'/'bath')—derived from Titus 3:5 and Eph. 5:26— which is prefigured by the many occurrences of water in the Old Testament.[410]

7.3.8 Testamentum Domini

This Church order does not describe a consecration of the water, but only mentions that it must be "pure and flowing".[411] Baptism, which occurred in the *baptisterium*,[412] took place at the Easter Vigil.[413] The infants were baptised first, followed by the men and the women.[414] But if there was anyone who wanted to dedicate himself to a life of celibacy, he was baptised first.[415] The women are instructed to loosen their hair and both men and women have to remove any gold jewellery as it is forbidden to take "anything foreign" into the water.[416]

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404 *MC* 3.1; ed. Röwekamp, *MC*, 122; tr. Yarnold, 176.

405 Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 483.

406 *Cats.* 1.2 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 372; tr. McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 1, 92). Cf. *Cats.* 1.6 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 377; tr. McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 1, 94).

407 *Cats.* 3.4–5; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 432–433; tr. Yarnold, 91.

408 *Cats.* 3.6; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 436; tr. Yarnold, 92.

409 *Cats.* 3.11; ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 441; tr. Yarnold, 94.

410 *Procat.* 2 (ed. Cross, 1; tr. Yarnold, 79), *Procat.* 11 (ed. Cross, 7; tr. Yarnold, 83); *Cats.* 3.4–6 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 429, 432–433, 436; tr. Yarnold, 90–92); *Cats.* 12 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 441, 444; tr. Yarnold, 94); *Cats.* 15 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 445, 448; tr. Yarnold, 95); *Cats.* 4.32 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, col. 493; tr. Yarnold, 108); *Cats.* 18.32 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 1053, 1056; tr. Yarnold, 167), *Cats.* 18.35 (ed. Migne, *PG* 33, cols. 1057, 1060; tr. McCauley & Stephenson, Vol. 2, 139–140); Cf. Ferguson, *Baptism*, 483.

411 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 126, lines 9–10; tr. Sperry-White, 27.

412 The dimensions of the *baptisterium* are described in 1.19: "Within, then, the front court let there be a *baptisterion* twenty-one cubits in length, for a type of the complete number of the prophets. Let the breadth [be] twelve cubits for a type of those who have been foredetermined to proclaim the Gospel. [Let there be] one entrance, three exits" (ed. Rahmani, 22, lines 20–23; tr. Sperry-White, 46).

413 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 126, lines 3–8; tr. Sperry-White, 27.

414 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 126, line 10; tr. Sperry-White, 27.

415 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 126, line 11–12; tr. Sperry-White, 27.

416 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 126, lines 13 and 17–21; tr. Sperry-White, 27.

After the *apotaxis/syntaxis* and the anointing with exorcised oil, the naked candidate descends into the font.[417] It is said that the ܫܡܫܐ too descends into the water.[418] Who is this ܫܡܫܐ? The term ܫܡܫܐ may refer to the baptising minister or to a deacon.[419] From the description of the immersions it becomes clear that it is normally a 'presbyter' (ܩܫܝܫܐ) who administers the ritual.[420] If ܫܡܫܐ refers to the presbyter, we have the picture of the minister standing in the water during the immersions. Although, as such, this would make complete sense, we face the problem here that the same presbyter is said to anoint the neophyte "when he comes up [out of the water]".[421] This suggests that the presbyter is standing outside of the pool at that time. Since it does not seem very likely that the presbyter left the font before the candidate and performed the anointing with wet clothes,[422] ܫܡܫܐ probably refers to a deacon who, somehow, may have assisted the presbyter to perform the immersions. Holding his hand on the baptizand's head, the minister interrogates him by asking him the three Trinitarian questions.[423] After each consent the initiand is immersed once.

After baptism, the neophytes are anointed with the oil of thanksgiving.[424] The women are anointed by widows, while the presbyter recites over them. During this ritual and the preceding baptism, these widows hide the women's nudity by a veil for the sake of modesty. Thereafter, the newly baptised are led into the church, where the bishop lays his hand on their heads and invokes the

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417 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, lines 12–13; tr. Sperry-White, 28.
418 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, line 13; tr. Sperry-White, 28.
419 Payne Smith, 586a; Sokoloff, 1577a.
420 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, line 12; tr. Sperry-White, 28. It is explicitly said that the bishop hands the candidate "over to the presbyter who baptizes". Only "[w]hen a presbyter is not present, a deacon may, of necessity, baptize" (II.10; ed. Rahmani, 132, line 17; tr. Sperry-White, 30). However, concerning someone who wants to live a life of virginity, it is said that such a person is "baptized by the bishop's hand" (ܒܐܝܕܐ ܕܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ; II.8; ed. Rahmani, 126, line 12; tr. Sperry-White, 27). Does this mean that the bishop baptises only this particular category of initiands, or do we have a conflation of different traditions here?
421 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, line 25; tr. Sperry-White, 28.
422 Especially when there were multiple candidates, which would create the almost impossible situation that the presbyter would have to enter and leave the font with each candidate (!).
423 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, lines 14–24; tr. Sperry-White, 28. Concerning the renunciation and adherence, it is said that the children who are able to speak are expected to answer for themselves; in other cases the parents or a family member has to reply for them (II.8; ed. Rahmani, 126, lines 13–16; tr. Sperry-White, 27). It seems likely, that the same instruction also holds for baptism itself.
424 *TD* II.8; ed. Rahmani, 128, line 25–130, line 2; tr. Sperry-White, 28.

Holy Spirit over them.[425] Next, the bishop anoints them and gives them the kiss of peace.[426] The newly initiated are now allowed to pray together with the community and to celebrate the Eucharist, which directly follows.[427]

The only information concerning the meaning of baptism is found in the concluding prayer for the Holy Spirit. Baptism effectuates "forgiveness of sins through the washing of rebirth" and purges out "all the gloom of error and darkness of unbelief".[428]

7.3.9 Acts of John

Both accounts of baptism in the Syriac *Acts of John* witness a consecration of the water, although its position differs.[429] The first account has a separate blessing of the water following the blessing of the oil and actually says that John "signed" (ܚܬܡ) the water in the name of the Trinity.[430] In the second account, the oil and the water are consecrated simultaneously and the description includes an epiclesis of the Holy Spirit both over the elements (oil, water) and the candidates.[431] After the stripping and the anointing, the initiand descends into the water and makes the confession: "I believe in the Father and in the Son and in the Spirit of holiness".[432] Holding his hand on the baptizand's head, the apostle immerses him three times, once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son and once in the name of the Holy Spirit.[433] The ritual is concluded with the vesting with white garments and the kiss of peace, after which the newly baptised is addressed thus: "Peace unto thee, thou new bridegroom, who hadst grown old and effete in sin, and, lo, today art become a youth, and thy name has been written in Heaven".[434] After initiation the Eucharist is celebrated.

The effects of baptism are forgiveness of sins[435] and cleansing from uncleanness, as well as filial adoption.[436] The latter is realised by the reception of the

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425 *TD* II.9; ed. Rahmani, 130, lines 3–15; tr. Sperry-White, 29.

426 *TD* II.9; ed. Rahmani, 130, lines 16–22; tr. Sperry-White, 29.

427 *TD* II.10; ed. Rahmani, 130, line 23–132, line 17; tr. Sperry-White, 29–30.

428 *TD* II.9; ed. Rahmani, 130, lines 8–10; tr. Sperry-White, 29.

429 For an overview of the whole rite, see p. 278 f.

430 Ed. Wright, I, 42; tr. Wright, II, 39.

431 Ed. Wright, I, 58; tr. Wright, II, 53–54.

432 Ed. Wright, I, 44; tr. Wright, II, 40. Most rituals from the stripping to the immersion are only attested by the first account. Cf. Klijn, "Syriac Acts of John," 221.

433 Ed. Wright, I, 44; tr. Wright, II, 40. Cf. Ed. Wright, I, 46; tr. Wright, II, 42.

434 Ed. Wright, I, 44; tr. Wright, II, 40–41.

435 Ed. Wright, I, 59; tr. Wright, II, 54 (and other passages).

436 See the quotation of the prayer in n431.

Holy Spirit, which enables the neophyte to call God 'Father'. The new Christian is portrayed as a lost sheep that has been found;[437] joy in heaven is the result.[438]

7.3.10 AR

The initiand is immersed thrice,[439] accompanied by a passive formula of the pattern 'N is baptized …'.[440] After baptism, the initiated receives a crown (ܟܠܝܠܐ) on his head[441] and is vested in white garments.[442] Incense is burned[443] and the neophyte is received into the church.[444] The Eucharist follows.

The font "fulfils the place of the grave (ܩܒܪܐ)"[445] and the three immersions signify "the three days Jesus was in Sheol among the dead".[446] As an extension of this image, the ascent from the font depicts "the resurrection of Jesus from the grave".[447] At the same time, baptism is seen as a "rebirth" (ܡܘܠܕܐ ܕܬܪܝܢ) and the water signifies "the womb (ܥܘܒܐ) which gives birth to life".[448]

The different ritual acts are interpreted as follows. The passive baptismal formula indicates that the minister is not the source of baptism; he is just God's chosen vessel to administer the ritual.[449] The crown which is put on the neophytes' head signifies "the freedom" he has "received from Christ".[450] The white garments are a type of "the heavenly glories"[451] and their softness is "a sign of the rebirth of the body".[452] The incense burned in front of the newly baptised is a sign of their "enlightened knowledge … which is in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit".[453] And the entry into the church "indicates their spiritual marriage".[454]

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437   Ed. Wright, I, 45; tr. Wright, II, 42.
438   Ed. Wright, I, 45; tr. Wright, II, 41.
439   *AR* 11; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 40–41.
440   *AR* 12; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 42–43.
441   *AR* 14; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 44–45. For a discussion of the similarities between baptism and marriage in the early centuries and the function of the crown in this, see Ray, "Baptismal Images".
442   *AR* 15; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 44–45.
443   *AR* 17; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 46–47.
444   *AR* 18; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 46–47.
445   *AR* 10; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 40–41.
446   *AR* 11; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 40–41.
447   *AR* 13; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 42–43.
448   *AR* 10; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 40–41.
449   *AR* 12; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 42–43.
450   *AR* 14; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 44–45.
451   *AR* 15; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 44–45.
452   *AR* 16; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 44–45.
453   *AR* 17; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 46–47.
454   *AR* 18; ed. and tr. Brock, "Commentaries," 46–47.

7.3.11   Barberini Euchologion

In this ordo the water, which is likened to the Jordan,[455] is consecrated by an epiclesis of the Holy Spirit.[456] Special attention is given to the destruction of Evil powers. After this prayer, the bishop "breathes into the water three times and signs it with his finger three times",[457] followed by another prayer for the effectiveness of baptism in which the effects of baptism are enumerated:

> But, maker of all things, declare this water to be a water of rest, water of redemption, water of sanctification, a cleansing of the pollution of the body and soul, a loosening of chains, forgiveness of sins, enlightenment of souls, washing of rebirth, grace of adoption, raiment of immortality, renewal of spirit, fount of life. For you, Lord, have said, *Wash yourselves and make yourselves clean* [Isa. 1.16]. Take away the wickedness from our souls. You have given us the new birth from above by water and Spirit. Be present, Lord, in this so that they may *put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts* [Eph. 4.22], and put on the new man, who is restored after the image of him that created him: that being *planted together in the likeness of the death* [Rom. 6.5] of your Only-Begotten Son, through baptism, they may share also in the resurrection: and guarding the gift of your Holy Spirit, and increasing the store of grace, they may receive the *prize of the high calling* [Phil. 3.14] and be numbered among *the firstborn who are written in heaven* [Heb. 12.23] in Christ Jesus our Lord …[458]

Next, the bishop blesses the oil and makes three crosses with it in the water.[459] Having been anointed, the candidate is baptised by the bishop, who recites the passive formula "Such a one is baptized in the name, etc.".[460] After baptism, a singer recites Psalm 32:1: "Blessed are they whose iniquities have been forgiven". Then, the bishop says a prayer for the chrism, recites Gal. 3:27, "As many as are baptized in Christ have put on Christ", anoints the candidates and concludes the rite by another recitation of Psalm 32:1.[461]

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455   *BE* 95ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 125; tr. Whitaker, 119.

456   *BE* 99ᵛ–100ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 127; tr. Whitaker, 121.

457   *BE* 100ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 127; tr. Whitaker, 121.

458   *BE* 100ᵛ–102ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 128; tr. Whitaker, 121 (his italics).

459   *BE* 102ᵛ–103ᵛ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 129; tr. Whitaker, 122.

460   *BE* 104ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 130; tr. Whitaker, 122.

461   *BE* 104ʳ–106ʳ; ed. Parenti & Velkovska, 130; tr. Whitaker, 122–123.

The above discussion of the ritual of baptism in Syro-Palestine paints the following picture. Most sources indicate naked baptism, consisting of three immersions. Where the baptismal formula is given, it is always Trinitarian, declaratory and passive, except for the Jerusalem *MC* and the *Testamentum Domini*, which have a Trinitarian interrogation.[462] Several sources attest that the minister (bishop or presbyter) holds his hand on the baptizand's head during the immersions. Most sources either explicitly mention or allude to the post-baptismal ritual vesting with the (white) baptismal garment. An additional ritual kiss is frequently attested (Chrysostom, *Testamentum Domini*, *Acts of John*, Narsai). Only *AR* witnesses a crowning and a burning of incense.

As for the mystagogy of the water bath, the most common images are that of dying/rising with Christ (font as tomb) and rebirth (font as womb). The latter is strongly preferred by Aphrahat and Ephrem—credited for being the first to apply the term 'womb' to the font—who hardly, if ever, seem to portray the font as a tomb. The opposite is true for the *Apostolic Constitutions*

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462 Scholars agree that the original praxis in the West was the baptismal interrogation, which was not replaced by the declaratory formula running 'I baptise you in the name of …' before the eighth century (Stenzel, *Taufe*, 121; Whitaker, "History," 4). Concerning the development of the Eastern, especially the Syrian, formula, different positions have been taken, however. Stenzel, *Taufe*, 111–125, for example, contends that also in Syria the baptismal interrogation was the original praxis. He conjectures that the change from an interrogation to a declaratory formula was the result of the introduction of the *syntaxis*, which would have made the interrogation superfluous. Stenzel points to John Chrysostom, who would be the first witness to a declaratory formula and also has a *syntaxis*. It is certainly notable that the Syrian rite has both a *syntaxis* and a declaratory formula, while the Western rite shows an interrogation without *syntaxis*. One would easily be tempted to see a relation here between the introduction of the *syntaxis* and the change of the interrogation for a declaratory formula. However, as Stenzel himself is aware (p. 105n99), the original form of the *syntaxis* was not Trinitarian but Christological. But is it reasonable to suppose that a Trinitarian baptismal interrogation would have been dropped for the sake of a Christological *syntaxis*? Furthermore, Whitaker, in his two contributions "Baptismal Formula" and "History", has convincingly shown that the declaratory formula is already attested long before Chrysostom, in the third-century *Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena*, where the apostle Paul says: "We baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Whitaker, "Baptismal Formula," 351). Whitaker suggests that the declaratory form moved to the West via North Africa. Since the Western form is active, this should have happened before the introduction of the passive Syrian form in the late fourth century. Although Whitaker's theory has its strength, many questions remain. One of them concerns the praxis in Jerusalem. If the interrogation in *MC* is a Western influence, why was it restricted to Jerusalem and why did it not spread further to the North? And if the Syrian formula influenced the West via Alexandria, why did it not affect Jerusalem? See further Day, *Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 94.

and the Jerusalem *MC*, in which baptism is mainly depicted as a mimesis of Christ's dying on the cross. Both images are used in a more balanced way in John Chrysostom, Theodore, Narsai and *AR*. The likening of the three immersions to Christ's three-day burial is found in the Jerusalem *MC* and *AR* as well as Narsai.[463] When the immersions signify the dying with Christ, the emersion often symbolises the resurrection, but not always (as in the Jerusalem *MC*). Like Theodore and Narsai, Chrysostom and Ephrem extend the idea of rebirth to the Eucharist, which is depicted as food for infants.

Bridal imagery[464] with Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church/believer as the bride is found in a developed way in Chrysostom and Ephrem, is clearly attested in Narsai, and recurs in the Syriac *Acts of John* and *AR*.[465] It is noteworthy that in Narsai as well as in the *Acts of John* the initiand is not likened to the bride, but to the bridegroom.

The image of baptism as a return to paradise is fully developed by Ephrem and is also present in Theodore, Chrysostom, and the Jerusalem *MC*. In Narsai, however, the idea seems to be lacking.

A typical Syrian image[466] we have encountered several times is that of the font as a furnace and the Holy Spirit as fire. Two variants occur: the font depicted as a kiln in which vessels are baked (Theodore, Chrysostom)[467] and the font portrayed as a metallurgical oven in which metals are melted and purged from rust (Chrysostom, Narsai).

Especially common in our sources are clothing metaphors, usually combined with the symbolism of (dis)robing. The baptizand is portrayed as putting off the old man (or the garment of sin) and putting on the new man/Christ/the Spirit (or the robe of glory).[468]

Among the many scriptural loci from both testaments, John 19:34 takes a special place. According to a favourite interpretation, the water and the blood symbolise both the mysteries of baptism and the Eucharist. Further speculation sees the lance as the pendant of the flaming sword of Gen. 3:24 or the blood

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463　And in many more sources as indicated in n179 of the present chapter.

464　Reacting to Maxwell Johnson's *Images of Baptism*, Ray, "Baptismal Images," 120 proposes adding the image of marriage to the list of more common images like dying with Christ and new birth.

465　In *AT* (12 and 14) and Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* (6.1), it is not so much the common believer, but the virgin who is engaged in the true marriage with Christ.

466　Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 104–106.

467　But also elsewhere in Narsai and in the third Epiphany hymn attributed to Ephrem. See below.

468　Cf. Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27; Col. 3:9–10; Eph. 4:22–24. For a discussion of clothing imagery in the *Odes of Solomon*, see Vleugels, "Keeping the Mystery," 338–339.

as a symbol of the 'baptism of martyrs'. It is noteworthy that any reference to John 19:34 is absent in both Theodore and Narsai.

A strong consensus among the sources is that baptism is a fully divine work. This conviction is particularly expressed by the consecration of the water through which the Divinity, usually the Spirit or Christ, becomes connected to the font, changing ordinary water into holy water. Also the passive baptismal formula 'So-and-so is baptised …' (found in Chrysostom, Theodore, Narsai, *AR*, and the *Euchologion*), indicates that it is God who baptises; the minister of the mystery (even the pontiff) is only an instrument.[469] The sources also agree that the neophyte receives (of) the Holy Spirit, although they differ upon the question as to which act the bestowal of the Spirit is ritually connected to (the pre-baptismal anointing, baptism, the post-baptismal chrismation).

The most important effect of initiation is forgiveness of sins.[470] Other recurrent benefits are filial adoption, new birth (renewal, re-creation),[471] regeneration, enlightenment, sanctification, cleansing, and purification. Furthermore, the neophytes become members of the Church, receive admission to the Eucharist, and become heirs of the future Kingdom.

7.4   The Rituals Compared

With the other sources in their vicinity, Theodore and Narsai share the same basic pattern of baptism. After the consecration of the water, the undressed candidate is immersed three times, while the minister recites a passive Trinitarian formula, running "So-and-so is baptised in the name of …". Having ascended from the font, the neophyte is robed with the baptismal garment and received into the community.

Nevertheless, a closer look reveals both important similarities and differences between the particular ritual acts of Theodore and Narsai. To begin with, the blessing of the water seems to indicate a different emphasis. Although neither Theodore, nor Narsai provides the exact words of the epiclesis, it is noteworthy that Theodore speaks solely of the invocation of the Holy Spirit, while Narsai instead mentions the Trinitarian character of the ritual. This does not necessarily imply that Theodore's consecration was not Trinitarian or that

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469   Cf. Kretschmar, "Geschichte des Taufgottesdienstes," 189.

470   But not in Theodore, see below.

471   Both the metaphors of 'new birth' and 're-creation' are already related to baptism in the *Odes of Solomon* (Vleugels, "Keeping the Mystery," 333–335).

Narsai's blessing did not concern the Holy Spirit (as we have actually seen). But at least it discloses that both mystagogues were, at that moment, interested in different aspects of the ritual. Given Narsai's Trinitarian statements elsewhere (see also below), it is my impression that his emphasis on the Trinity (although the Spirit still remains the effective agent of the ritual) is induced by anti-heretical sentiment.

It is noteworthy that Narsai gives much attention to the apparel in which the minister appears after the consecration of the water. Since Theodore and Narsai are the only ones who actually make mention of the bishop's garb, it is likely that Narsai is influenced by Theodore here. Also the symbolism of the dress is similar; it signifies the future glory effected by baptism. Nevertheless, while both mystagogues undoubtedly see this state fully realised at the resurrection, Narsai speaks in more general terms without stressing its eschatological fulfilment. When he says, for example, "that the mystery which is (administered) by his [the bishop's, NW] hands clothes with glory him that approaches it",[472] it seems that this 'glory' is already achieved in the near future, directly following baptism. Furthermore, Theodore informs the catechumen that the bishop, by his apparel, "inspires you with fear, and with fear he infuses love into you, so that you may through the newness of his garments look into the power which it represents". This aspect is completely lacking in Narsai. A final observation concerns the different moments when the bishop's garb is introduced. Theodore associates it with the signing on the forehead, while Narsai links it to the consecration of the water.

In all likelihood, in both rites the candidates were baptised stark naked. Theodore interprets the disrobing before the full body anointing as a removal of the garments of sin and, consequently, as a return to paradisal innocence. Yet, Narsai does not give any mystagogy of the undressing or state of nakedness in his liturgical homilies. This sets him apart not only from Theodore, but also from Ephrem's fully developed conception of 'paradise regained'.

In Narsai's rite, the immersions are introduced by a threefold invocation of the Trinity, saying, "Father and Son and Holy Spirit, one equality". This anti-heretical proclamation is lacking in Theodore. Furthermore, the baptismal formulas have a slightly different phrasing.[473] However, Narsai's mention of 'Spirit' instead of 'Holy Spirit' does not necessarily imply that the formula itself did not have the latter. Narsai definitely has nothing against the term, as is shown by

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472   21,344:13–14; *s* :8.
473   Theodore: ܚܒܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܫܡ ܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ.
      Narsai: ܦܠ ܚܒܬ ܒܬܡܗܐ ܕܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ.

the directly preceding invocation of the Trinity. We may conjecture, therefore, that he dropped the term to fit his twelve syllable pattern.[474]

The performance of the immersions in Theodore and Narsai is in general agreement with what is known from other sources. The baptizand probably took a sitting or kneeling position and ducked his head under the water to immerse himself. Each immersion coincided with the bishop reciting one of the names of the Trinity. Only Theodore mentions that the minister put his hand on the candidate's head and pushed it down at each immersion. But since the bishop functions as the instrument through whom God operates, it is more than likely that the same occurred in Narsai's rite.

Both rites include the post-baptismal vesting with the (white) baptismal garment, and Narsai further adds that the newly baptised is embraced and kissed, first by the bishop and then by others. Theodore and Narsai agree that the robe symbolises the grandeur of the world to come. Unlike Theodore, Narsai portrays the newly baptised as a bridegroom who takes place at the marriage-supper. In this imagery, the robe fulfils the function of the wedding garment or robe of glory. It is notable that this conception of the robe of glory, so typical for Syriac Christianity, is only alluded to once by Theodore,[475] while Narsai—although he does not elaborate on the imagery—hints at it several times.

The main baptismal images in both Theodore and Narsai are baptism as a dying/rising with Christ (Rom. 6) and baptism as rebirth/re-creation. As we have seen, the Rom. 6 image is hardly, if ever, attested in the earlier East Syrian tradition. Given this circumstance, we might easily be tempted to ascribe Narsai's use of the image to a direct influence of Theodore. However, from the fourth century onwards, the Rom. 6 image is generally gaining ground in Syria. Especially *AR* shows that by the time of Narsai's writing activity the image must have been part of the larger East Syrian heritage. There is no compelling reason, then, to suppose that Narsai would have been exclusively dependent on Theodore in this respect. Furthermore, the whole idea of baptism as a burial and the font as a tomb is more developed in Narsai than in Theodore. Although the image of dying and rising with Christ is part of Theodore's baptismal theology and also functions as a general mystagogical interpretation of the ritual itself, it is not so much the dying part but the rising as a type of the resurrection which is the concern of the West Syrian mystagogue. Narsai, on the other hand, has a much more developed Rom. 6 mystagogy of the ritual itself, which basically portrays baptism as a type of Christ's death; the font depicts the 'tomb'

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474   As noted on other occasions, see pp. 178n265, 195, 215, and 292n458.
475   Concerning the full body anointing, see p. 316–317.

and the three immersions represent the three-day burial. Interestingly, both the term 'tomb' and the image of the three days are lacking in Theodore but present in *AR*. Another difference between Theodore and Narsai is that the former usually directly relates the dying and rising to Christ in the Pauline sense. Baptism is a symbolic participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. Narsai, however, relates the ritual to Christ only concerning the three immersions (which symbolise the three days in the tomb).

Concerning the image of baptism as birth and the font as womb, there is no doubt that Theodore and Narsai share a common Syrian heritage. It is out of the question, therefore, that Narsai would have borrowed the notion exclusively from Theodore. Also the terminology used does not indicate a dependency. Theodore's favourite term is definitely 'second birth' (ܬܠܕ ܕܬܪܬܝܢ), which he uses over and over again.[476] Narsai, however, never employs ܬܠܕ ܕܬܪܬܝܢ, but prefers 'birth' (ܬܠܕ)[477] and 'new birth' (ܬܠܕ ܚܕܬܐ)[478] instead, two terms Theodore hardly ever uses.[479] Furthermore, since Ephrem seems to be the first to apply the term 'womb' to the font, it is not unconceivable that both Theodore and Narsai (directly or indirectly) inherited this image from Ephrem.

Narsai, as well as Theodore, extends the birth image to the Eucharist, portrayed as nurture for infants. As indicated above, however, this is not characteristic of only Theodore and Narsai, since the same is found in Chrysostom and Ephrem. Moreover, unlike Theodore but similar to Chrysostom, Narsai depicts the Church as the Mother of the neophytes, who nurtures her children with the Body and Blood of the Eucharist. It seems, then, that Narsai draws on a broader Syrian tradition here.

What is typical for Theodore, though, is his eschatological framework with the second birth of baptism being the symbol of the real second birth at the resurrection. This basic idea that baptism is a symbol of the future resurrection is shared by Narsai. He even employs exactly the same terminology as Theodore when he says: "His birth (in Baptism) is a symbol of that birth which is to be at the end …".[480] Since this particular symbolism is only attested by Theodore and Narsai, it is likely that Narsai is dependent on Theodore here. Neverthe-

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476   E.g. 3,49:29 ff. (3,2 ff.); *s* 3,181:7 ff. Other terms he (sparsely) uses are 'birth' (ܬܠܕ) (e.g. 3,50:33 (3,3); *s* 3,182:16), 'new birth' (ܡܘܠܕܐ ܚܕܬܐ) (2,44:30 (2,14); *s* 2,175:9), 'birth of baptism' (ܬܠܕ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) (e.g. 3,73:27–28 (3,6); *s* 3,208:22), and 'sacramental birth' (ܡܘܠܕܐ ܕܐܪ̈ܙܢܝܐ/ܐܪ̈ܙܢܝܐ) (e.g. 3,55:6–7 (3,9); *s* 3,187:8).

477   21,342:2 (*s* :1); 21,347:8 (*s* :5); 21,347:13 (*s* :8); 21,350:3 (*s* :2).

478   21,342:4 (*s* :3); 21,342:23 (*s* :14); 21,345:9–10 (*s* :5); 21,347:14–15 (*s* :9).

479   Terms used only once are: 'mystical birth' (ܬܠܕ ܐܪܙܢܝܐ) (21,347:12; *s* :8) and 'birth of baptism' (ܬܠܕ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ) (21,350:3; *s* :2).

480   21,347:8–10; *s* :5–6. Cf. Brock, *Holy Spirit*, 84, who makes the same observation.

less, we must note that, except for the quote above, Narsai usually employs the term 'birth' concerning baptism itself and not with reference to the resurrection. And contrary to Theodore, who never gets tired of repeating that baptism is a second birth only in so far as it is a symbol of the real second birth at the resurrection, Narsai normally speaks of baptism as birth without further qualification. So, although Narsai accepts Theodore's eschatological scheme, his way of speaking seems to betray that he is part of a tradition which unreservedly applies the birth image to baptism itself (in the present).

Furthermore, Narsai puts much more emphasis on the notion of baptism as re-creation than Theodore. In fact, the re-creation or renewal of man's image by baptism is Narsai's main concern in his two liturgical homilies; the birth image is an application of the image of re-creation. In Theodore, it is more or less the reverse: the image of the potter (Jer. 18) illustrates the dominant birth image.[481] As indicated above, Theodore expands the biblical story of the potter with the picture of baptism as a kiln. Just as the vessel is reshaped and baked, man is renewed in the font (the oven) by the heat of the Holy Spirit (the fire). This typical Syrian image of the font as a furnace and the Holy Spirit as fire recurs several times in Narsai. The difference with Theodore is, however, that Narsai does not portray the font as a kiln but as a metallurgical oven in which metals are melted and purified.

It has already been indicated several times in the present study that Narsai uses the parable of the prodigal son as a baptismal narrative. Other imagery not found in Theodore includes the notion of baptism as a marriage, the comparison between the waters of creation and baptism, and the portrayal of God as

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481 The notion of the potter, though absent from Narsai's liturgical homilies, is present in his homily *On Epiphany*: "The image which was tarnished with the filth of iniquity because of (Adam's) desire for fruit is the very one which the Spirit moulded in the crucible of baptism. The lowly vessel of soft clay the Potter took and remade it (into) a vessel that is useful for glorious things. The nature of Adam's clay the Creator took and fashioned it in water and heated it in the spirit; and it acquired beauty" (367–372; ed. and tr. McLeod, *Metrical Homilies*, 93). Interestingly, the image of the potter is not only attested by Chrysostom, as discussed above, but also by the third hymn on Epiphany attributed to Ephrem. In stanza 19 (18) it says: "The vessel moulded of clay, gains beauty from the water, receives strength from the fire; but if it slips it is ruined, it cannot be afresh renewed. Ye are vessels of grace; be ye ware of it, even of justice, for it grants not two renewals" (ed. Beck, *Nativitate*, 150; tr. ANF II/13, 270). We have here another indication that, more often than not, writers like Theodore and Narsai were drawing upon a common tradition. Cf. Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 70, who argues that the great resemblance between early Christian sources as for the use of Old Testament images "proves that they form a common teaching going back to the first origins of the Church".

an Artist who paints the new image on the tablet of the waters. Further, we find the likening of the consecration of the water by the bishop to Moses at the Red Sea, to the angel Gabriel speaking to Mary, and even to God creating the world by His word. Especially the absence of the common Old Testament images of creation and the crossing of the Red Sea in Theodore is remarkable. Daniélou attributes this to the general Antiochene hostility to typology.[482]

As for the effects of baptism, Theodore and Narsai agree that man is delivered from the slavery of the Devil and death and transposed from a state of mortality[483] to immortality. Additionally, Theodore speaks of the benefits of "incorruptibility" (ܐܠ ܡܬܚܒܠܢܘܬܐ), "impassibility" (ܐܠ ܚܫܘܫܘܬܐ), and "immutability" (ܐܠ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܢܘܬܐ),[484] terms not found in Narsai. Moreover, it is remarkable that Theodore never mentions that baptism yields 'forgiveness' (of sins), and nowhere in his baptismal homilies refers to the deliverance from sin,[485] while it is clear from his writings that he regards sin as the cause of death and corruption. The reason for this may be that Theodore does not consider sin, but mortality as the basic problem of human nature.[486] Since God foresaw Adam's infraction, He "created Adam mortal from the beginning so that after man's disobedience (sin), death would both serve as his punishment and, unlike sin, also as a constitutive part of his nature".[487] Therefore, man inherits not sin, but mortality from his forefather. Because of man's (perception of his) inherited mortality, he is inclined to sin, which is a property of the will, not of nature.[488] Looking at it in that light, it becomes understandable why Theodore puts more emphasis on the solution to the problem of mortality than that of sin.[489]

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482   *Bible and Liturgy*, 70.

483   That is: original mortality. See the discussion below.

484   Al mentioned together in 3,56:3–4 (3,10; *s* 3,188:11–12) and 3,62:11–12 (3,17; *s* 3,195:11–12).

485   The only reference is found in the first homily on the Eucharist (xv,90:5 (xv,34); *s* 3,227:19).

486   Soro, *Church of the East*, 190–198. The exact relation between mortality and sin in Theodore is complex, though. As Soro puts it: "… Theodore curiously regards mortality, at once, as the cause and the effect of sin" (p. 197). See further Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 29–34; Greer, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 22 ff.; Kalantzis, "Creatio ex Terrae"; Koch, *Heilsverwirklichung*, 71–75; Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, 173–189; Ziegenaus, *Menschenbild*, 71–73.

487   Soro, *Church of the East*, 191.

488   Ibid., 194; Vööbus, "Theological Anthropology," 118–119. The fall "intensified the inclination to sin" (idem, 119).

489   As Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, 164 summarises Theodore's concern: "Man's essential problem is that of the mortality of the body, with all that such mortality implies and entails".

It has been ascertained by others that Narsai shares Theodore's (uncommon) view of original mortality.[490] At the same time, he clearly informs his audience that by baptism God grants "forgiveness of iniquity (ܫܘܒܩ ܥܘܠܐ)"[491] and deliverance from sin.[492] And although Narsai does not emphasise these benefits—in his liturgical homilies both are mentioned only once in connection with baptism—he puts them right into the heart of his discussion of the ritual. This may indicate that 1) Narsai is influenced by Theodore's general theology, but at the same time that 2) he reflects the traditional and widely attested baptismal theology of forgiveness of sins. In this way, we have another interesting illustration here of how a general influence of Theodore goes together with Narsai remaining within the boundaries of traditional conventions.

Theodore puts much emphasis on the Pauline conception of filial adoption. The whole Trinitarian baptismal formula is explained in terms of adoptive sonship. This gift is closely related to the reception of the Holy Spirit, which Theodore ritually connects to the water bath. Given the importance of filial adoption in Theodore, it is remarkable that the notion is completely absent in Narsai.[493]

Another difference concerns the cleansing effect of baptism. At several times, Narsai indicates that the initiand is cleansed,[494] purified,[495] or washed.[496] Theodore never refers to this aspect of baptism.

To conclude with, both mystagogues portray baptism as something impressive and wonderful. It is Theodore, however, who stresses this the most. Time and again he underlines the 'awe-inspiring' nature of the ritual. During the immersions, the initiand must receive his transformation in 'silence and awe'. In Narsai, the awe-inspiring feature of the ritual becomes particularly visible in his panegyric on the priesthood. That God has chosen mortal men to re-create mankind even fills the angels with awe. Nevertheless, Narsai does not emphasise the awe-inspiring character of the ritual itself. With the Prodigal Son as the archetype of the penitent convert, baptism is most of all a warm homecoming experience.

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490   Gignoux, *Sur la création*, 488ff.; Frishman, *Divine Economy*, 180–181, 190–191; Vööbus, "Theological Anthropology,"121.
491   21,346:12; *S* :7.
492   21,346:24; *S* :14.
493   Cf. p. 125.
494   21,344:27 (*S* :17); 21,345:25–28 (*S* :15–16).
495   22,358:24 (*S* :15); 21,343:38–344:1 (*S* :23–24).
496   21,349:9–10; *S* :5–6.

7.5   Conclusion

The immersion rituals attested by Theodore and Narsai are basically the same. Since, however, both are in agreement with the general practice witnessed by other sources in their vicinity, there is no compelling argument to suppose that Narsai is exclusively dependent on Theodore in this respect. It is more likely that both reflect a mutual heritage. Yet, the mention of the embracing and kissing after baptism in Narsai—lacking in Theodore—indicates the influence of different sub-traditions as well. And the threefold invocation of the Trinity preceding baptism seems unique for Narsai.

The main baptismal images used, the dying/rising with Christ (Rom. 6) and rebirth (John 3), were so widespread at the time of Narsai's writing that the occurrence of the imagery in both Narsai and Theodore is also satisfactorily explained by assuming a common tradition. Moreover, Narsai's heavier focus on re-creation, his more developed Rom. 6-mystagogy of the ritual itself, his use of (Old Testament) images which are absent from Theodore, his omission of any mystagogy on undressing/nakedness and of the benefit of filial adoption—so prominent in Theodore—and his interest in the cleansing effect of baptism, all reveal (again) that he is by no means a simple imitator of his Teacher. To the contrary, he makes his own deliberate choices, drawing from different sub-traditions. This may be further illustrated by two images in Narsai which are lacking in Theodore: the image of the baptised as a bridegroom and the likening of the three immersions to Christ's three-day burial. The first also occurs in the Syriac *Acts of John*, while the second is attested by *AR*. Generally speaking, Narsai's style, so rich in imagery, shows most of all that he is a poet in the tradition of Ephrem.[497]

Nevertheless, our critical comparison leaves no doubt that Narsai has read and used Theodore. This is most clearly seen by the similar discussion of the (meaning of the) bishop's garb, not mentioned by any other source, and Narsai's concurrence with Theodore's general theology and his sacramental eschatology. But even here the marked differences in both focus and terminology rule out a slavish and uncritical imitation, and indicate that Narsai remains within specific traditional boundaries.

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497   Cf. Frishman, *Divine Economy*, 180.

General Conclusion

The *Baptismal Homilies* of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the *Liturgical Homilies* of Narsai of Nisibis provide us with valuable insight into the way new converts were initiated in West and East Syria. A critical comparison of these homilies within the liturgical context of Syria and its vicinity offers us an interesting understanding of how Narsai (may have) used Theodore. The poetic nature of Narsai's homilies has not been found to be a real obstacle for this endeavour, although the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' is particularly valid here. In some cases we got the impression that Narsai's poetic imagery did not reflect or relate to an existent ritual practice. And since the twelve-syllable pattern may in some instances have guided Narsai in preferring one term over another, one must be careful in concluding too hastily that he did or did not know a particular term. Indications of this phenomenon have been found especially concerning the verbatim of the formulas for the *apotaxis* and baptism.

The present study shows the importance of deriving both the terminology and the structure of the rite—the necessary armamentarium for a fruitful comparison—from the sources themselves, instead of approaching the texts with preconceived ideas. With reference to the rites of Theodore and Narsai, the term 'baptism' is best reserved for the water rite itself. Furthermore, the Eucharist is part of neither 'baptism', nor the 'baptismal rite', nor the whole process of 'initiation'. According to both Theodore and Narsai, the "decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person" (Mircea Eliade) is fully achieved by baptism; the Eucharist does not contribute anything to this but is the necessary nourishment to keep the newborn child alive.

As for the structure of the rites, it turns out that the commonly applied threefold pattern of pre-baptismal rituals/baptism/post-baptismal rituals, does not properly fit the rites of Theodore and Narsai. Instead, the basic structure of both rites consists of two units, viz. the rituals *preceding* the mystery/ies (*'rāzā /'rāzē*) and the rituals *of* the mystery/ies, the latter of which begins with the signing on the forehead. The specific pattern of the two rites is remarkably different, though. Theodore's rite has the structure: enrolment-exorcism-Creed and Lord's Prayer-penitential prayer-*apotaxis/syntaxis*-signing on the forehead-rising and *orarium*-whole body anointing-consecration of the water-baptism-vesting with white garment-signing. While Narsai has: *apotaxis*-'exorcism'-*syntaxis*-enrolment-consecration of the oil-signing on the forehead-consecration of the water-baptism. After baptism the initiand is embraced and kissed, and vested with the baptismal garment. Theodore's rite is clearly the more developed one; absent from Narsai's rite are the proclamation of the

Creed and the Lord's Prayer, the whole body anointing, the spreading of the *orarium*, and the post-baptismal signing/anointing. Especially the latter indicates that Narsai has the more archaic Syrian pattern, which turns out to be a variant of the similar pattern in the anonymous *AR*, which has an exorcism after the *apotaxis/syntaxis*.

The distinct structure of the rites indicates that they follow different models. Although Theodore's post-baptismal signing was probably not for conferring the Spirit—the bestowal of the Spirit is ritually connected to the water—he himself sustains the sequence baptism-signing by referring to the order of Jesus' baptism. Narsai's traditional Syrian pattern of anointing-baptism is, instead, probably modelled after the sequence circumcision-baptism of Jewish proselyte initiation. This idea is strengthened by the phenomenon that the oil is likened to a sharp knife that cuts off iniquity. The conferring of the Spirit is realised in Narsai by the twin ritual of anointing-baptism, which makes him closer to the *Acts of Thomas*, Ephrem, and the Syriac *Acts of John* than to Theodore.

Since the function of a ritual is related to its position in the overall rite, a different structure inevitably results in a different function for similar rituals. This has been established concerning the enrolment, the role of the sponsor, the 'exorcism' (Lawsuit) (as related to the *apotaxis*), and the signing on the forehead.

As for the actual performance of the rituals which Theodore and Narsai have in common, we have ascertained some notable differences regarding the minister of the ritual, the words said, the bodily position, and the general flow of the ritual. Of course, similar rituals, however different they may be, still share a similar nature and purpose. So, although the place in the rite, the bodily positions, the formulas (as far as we can tell), and even the general performance of the *apotaxis/syntaxis* differs, the basic intention of these rituals remains the same: to renounce Satan and confess Christ. But the point is that these similarities are usually satisfactorily explained by an appeal to a common tradition. This even accounts for one of the most typical resemblances, the use of sackcloth during the 'exorcism'. The cursory way in which Narsai mentions the sackcloth better fits the scenario of a traditional element, the meaning of which is not longer underscored or understood, than that of the introduction of a new one.

To sum up our findings concerning the rites as such, there are no good arguments for claiming a dependence of Narsai on Theodore. If Narsai (or someone else, for that matter) had made an effort to bring the East Syrian rite into line with Theodore's, he did not do so very successfully. This all agrees with our scepticism regarding Narsai's alleged mandate to make alterations to a traditional

liturgy and our assumption that he was more likely commenting on a real rite of a certain East Syrian community in the middle of the fifth century.

Things are different on the level of the mystagogy, the interpretation of the rituals. This is where Narsai uses his freedom to borrow from Theodore as he pleases. His indebtedness to the West Syrian expositor is most evident concerning the portrayal of the 'exorcism' as a courtroom scene, the symbolism of the bishop's garb, and the interpretation of the term 'Satan's angels' in the formula of the *apotaxis*. Because of its peculiarity, the latter may be seen as the strongest indication that Narsai used Theodore's catechetical homilies. Yet, Narsai did not merely duplicate Theodore's mystagogy of the 'angels' as seven heretics, but carefully adapted the list to his own context (and target group) by replacing Marcion for Eutyches.

This brings us to the observation that Narsai is everything but a naïve imitator. There are notable differences in the way both construe the rituals. It is most remarkable that Narsai did not copy notions so prominent in Theodore, viz. citizenship of the heavenly city, filial adoption and the concept of *parrhesia*. Also noteworthy is that Narsai lacks any mystagogy on the undressing and nakedness of the candidate. And although Narsai generally concurs with Theodore's sacramental eschatology, he has a different emphasis. Only once, with words very akin to Theodore's, does he use 'birth' with reference to the resurrection. But usually, and contrary to Theodore—who never gets tired of repeating that baptism is a second birth only in so far as it is a symbol of the real second birth at the resurrection—Narsai speaks of baptism as birth without further qualification. This may indicate that Narsai is standing in a tradition which applies the birth image primarily to baptism itself.

Another illustrative example of how Narsai positions himself between Theodore and the conventions of the tradition concerns the widely attested baptismal theology of 'forgiveness of sins'. Probably because he considers man's mortality as the most fundamental problem of humanity, Theodore refrains from relating baptism to forgiveness of sins. In a similar way, concurring with Theodore's view on mortality, Narsai is reticent concerning his use of that particular notion. However, his mention of it right at the center of his discussion of baptism seems to betray that he stands in a tradition which sees forgiveness of sins as an important effect of baptism.

Standing in the tradition of Ephrem, Narsai's symbolism is generally richer than that of Theodore's instructions. Not only does he have a more developed Rom. 6 mystagogy, and does he put a heavier focus on baptism as re-creation, he also uses imagery not found in Theodore. Examples are the linking of the three immersions to the three-day stay of Jesus in the tomb, the symbolism of the oil, the cleansing effect of baptism, bridal imagery, and several OT images.

Narsai shares one or more of these images with Ephrem, the *Acts of Thomas*, the Syriac *Acts of John*, and AR. Also lacking in Theodore are Narsai's emphasis on the protective aspect of the ܪܘܫܡܐ concerning the military campaign against Satan and his demons, and his close association of the mark with the Trinity.

We may conclude that, in comparison with other influences on Narsai of Nisibis, the influence of Theodore of Mopsuestia regarding the baptismal rite and its mystagogy is not distinctive enough to claim that Narsai is (primarily) dependent on Theodore. The East Syrian poet presents himself in his liturgical homilies as a creative mystagogue, who, commenting on an existent baptismal rite different from Theodore's, draws from a broad and rich (East) Syrian tradition. In doing so, he uses Theodore's catechetical homilies as one source among others, not refraining from adapting the mystagogy of his esteemed teacher to his own context. Therefore, Narsai is not Theodore's copycat, but an artist who uses a wide spectrum of colours to paint the portrait he desires.

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